The Hill of Happiness

GEORGE N. SHUSTER

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by

George N. Shuster

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Preface by

Padraic Colum

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Preface

In these stories, written by one who was fortunate to have been brought up in a Franciscan community, I find a quality that is very refreshing—the quality of the homely.

I use the word in its primary sense, and I mean that these stories of a place where there is no family life give back to us the attraction of, the attachment to, the things of a home. And perhaps, because they have this quality, Mr. Shuster's stories are the more authentically Franciscan: the Franciscan spirit has always been directed towards making us feel that this world is a home—a home that we shall one day leave, but in which we are cherished and in which we find things that are cherishable. Any one who can communicate to us at this time of day even a little of this spirit is doing well by us, and Mr. Shuster's stories communicate a good deal of it to us.

These stories, then, are homely in the really sacred sense of the word. In them we meet men who address each other as "Brother," whose quaint names have the effect of making us feel

that we have known the bearers of them long, long ago. Here are men who wear habits that are brown like the dead leaves along the road, and who have quiet faces, and beside whom the men and women whom we meet outside St. Bonaventure's have the oddness and likableness of strangers whom we have met upon a holiday. And this is another very pleasant feeling that we get in reading these stories—we feel that we are on half-holidays and that we are sharers in little festivals.

In these stories the personal—that quality that has become so tiresome in contemporary writing—is left behind. There is nothing of the exotic and there is nothing of the distant in the happenings that are related. And yet, because they are homely they become memorable. They stay in our minds with the happenings that took place in the quietest and the most recollected parts of our lives. And it is very likely that when we have forgotten the most spectacular removal from Main Street, the most daring exposure of the most cryptic complex, the most exciting excursion into the most exotic regions, we will still remember how Brother Giles left a memorial of himself, how Brother Alphonse and Brother Guido debated upon the existence of the Ichthyosaurus, and of how Brother Exuper, having the

memory of the Wolf of Gubbio, tamed the mastiff that had been brought to terrorize him.

PADRAIC COLUM.

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Introductory Note

ABOUT Saint Francis there are many beautiful old stories which all the world has loved and called *fioretti,* or flowers. Nowadays especially people are fond of these happy tales and suffer them to be told over and over again, by poets and other literary persons. This is quite as it should be. We shall never grow tired of hearing about the Poor Man who walked with his brethren among the Umbrian mountains. But the cowl and cord of Assisi are not strange to the hills of our own country: they have a part in the golden beauty of California, in the gleam of northern snows, in the silence of lonely country fields. Here, then, is a handful of stories about an American monastery. The place described in them is so real that the author has only to make a brief pilgrimage in order to see once again the spires and trees—and even some of the people—he describes. The tales themselves are quite true. Indeed, it would be a gross blunder to spoil with fiction a reality that is so charming and unusual. Well, there is no need for further talk about the matter. If you read carefully, you will be able to find St. Bonaventure's for yourself, even if the name is inexact; and that would surely be a happy ending.

The HILL OF HAPPINESS

I. A Dream for Each

NOBODY has ever seen the monastery of Saint Bonaventure—even from a distance—without wishing to know all about it. There is something like a welcome in the mere glimpse of its interwoven trees and spires; so that, before you understand why, you have asked, "I wonder what the place is really like?" Such a question is difficult to answer, naturally. Indeed, it is only after having followed the Franciscans down their long corridors during many days that one discovers the whole truth. Half of Saint Bonaventure's has moved off into Heaven. Quite a little is left on earth, though, and may surprise you considerably if you happen to find out about it.

Brother Guido had taken a pinch of snuff. He had also tucked the box away. There was nothing unusual about either of these actions excepting

what might be termed a gusto of meditativeness. The Brother was musing furiously. He had something besides snuff up his brown sleeve.

Of this—whatever it might be—the cloister garden, stretched round about, remained unaware. It was a portly territory devoted to potatoes and cabbages and similar vegetables of substance, through the middle of which ran a light-hearted row of young apple trees. Brother Guido surveyed everything that lay under the light of an evening sun with much of the satisfaction that had been Midas' during the first stages of his magic power. But when the bell warned of supper, he put away his tools and hurried toward the garden gate with a look which really seemed to betray a thirst for vengeance.

"I shall tell every one I have called the scarcrow 'Brother Alphonse,' " he muttered bitterly. "After all, that is what Saint Peter will make of the man after death—the patron of scarecrows! Now if the others laugh and join me, perhaps the fellow may finally learn how to smile."

What had given cause for such a resolve? Well, it had been made necessary by Brother Alphonse's regrettable opposition to levity. Being a tall, thin, bespectacled person with shaggy whiskers and a taste for books, Brother Alphonse had been placed in charge of the library; and the

fact that he lived in constant nearness to long shelves of ascetic volumes in dark calf had aided nature in making him—as any honest observer would have been forced to admit—a trifle rusty and dusty. He was a crusader against even the echo of laughter.

Every afternoon at precisely three o'clock Brother Alphonse took a walk down the path which ran through the row of light-hearted apple trees. His purpose, however, was neither enjoyment of nature nor indulgence in gymnastics. By such things the Brother placed no store. He came to meditate upon how every one of these trees might have been a cross. "One cross, two crosses," he would count until he had triumphantly exhausted what melancholy arithmetic the garden afforded.

Brother Guido had become so accustomed to this gloomy pedestrianism that he no longer paid it the slightest attention. It must be noted, however, that he never forgot how on one occasion in autumn a large red apple had so timed its obedience to the laws of gravity that it collided with Brother Alphonse's nose most gravely indeed. Besides, the gardener was so keenly alive to the charm of growing things that he almost grew with them; and during certain seasons the birds chirped from the nape of his cowl as they might

have from Saint Francis' hand. Is it to be wondered at that he felt very happy and that sometimes, during the chanting of the office, he was listening in spirit to the *jubilate* of the orioles or even of a stray cardinal?

Upon this afternoon which ended in his displeasure, Brother Guido had become so interested in trimming the vines from which great purpling clusters of grapes hung down, that he turned to humming a melody which he had learned in boyhood among his father's grapes that grew up from the Rhine.

"The sun is in the blue, blue grapes,
Our souls with sunlight shine:
Oh, happy, happy shall we be,
A-drinking mellow wine."

The song went on innocently enough, for all its bacchanalian prophecy. But fate would have it that Brother Alphonse just then reached the middle of his sorrowful promenade and was greatly shocked at the sound of a carol so profane.

"Brother Guido, Brother Guido!" he called as if he had been overcome by sudden ill-health.

The gardener, summoned thus formidably, feared that apoplexy was on the verge of robbing the order of one of its most ascetic members.

He therefore dropped his work and hurried to give assistance.

"What is the matter, Alphonse?" he questioned breathlessly. "Are you sick? Eh?"

"It is not I who am sick," responded the other significantly. "Guido, have you forgotten?"

"Forgotten? What?" asked the gardener, ransacking his memory.

"The vows of your order—that you are a religious. I hate to say such things, but—this profane, this immoral song in the cloister garden!"

"Oh!" was all that Brother Guido could manage to say for the time being. He felt strongly inclined to stamp his foot upon the ground and give utterance to phrases that would send this grizzled librarian scurrying to his books. Hidden in his soul was a terrible desire to pull a nose. But his heart was really so jovial that with the grace of Heaven he managed to laugh.

"Stand there like an old tree that has no leaves, but only a bundle of dried-up twigs," he said reprovingly. "But I must ask you for one thing. I must ask you not to disturb my work and health with your stupid conversation."

"I have done my duty," retorted Brother Alphonse, tucking away his hands; but the gardener merely laughed again and began to work most industriously.

Nevertheless, the accusation rankled. Had there been a grain of truth in it? Brother Guido would not have admitted that for all the towers of earth; but there was something—was it attachment to this world and its fruits?—which irritated his conscience. The resultant discomfort spurred him to revenge; and having hit upon "Brother Scarecrow" he felt greatly relieved. Yet it was impossible to talk the matter over with any one that evening. A venerable guest from a foreign country had been invited to address the monastery; and he accepted so enthusiastically that bedtime arrived before the end of his remarks.

Brother Guido found consolation in the fact that he could announce the new title in the morning when, during the common recreation that followed breakfast and spiritual reading, everybody would be in a suitable mood. For the first time in months his evening distractions were not attributable to the beauties of nature. And as he lay down upon his pallet, the crucifix on the wall was hidden from sight by an attractive vision of "Brother Scarecrow."

But the adventure had merely begun. During the night Brother Guido was visited by a strange and impressive dream.

Just what had caused it might be difficult to determine, but the substance of the visitation was

this: he had died, and stood reverently before Our Lord, together with the Devil and his Guardian Angel. The really queer circumstance was, however, that there stood beside him, angular and mortified, the gaunt figure of Brother Alphonse. He was almost on the verge of forgetting the dignity of the occasion and addressing his fellow religious, when his name was spoken in a voice as clear as a December morning.

"Is this Brother Guido?" asked Our Lord; and having been assured that it was, He demanded, "How has he fulfilled the duties of his station in life?"

"By worshiping turnips and beans!" replied the Evil One sharply. "By singing gay songs in the cloister garden. By thinking of sparrows during matins and of robins during lauds. By refusing to step inside the library, and by making a pretense of tasting apples to see if they were ripe. By—"

"That will do," commanded Our Lord solemnly and called upon Saint Peter, who had appeared meanwhile with the records, to verify the charges. This the Saint did very promptly. He nodded his head with grave sadness.

"One moment!" said Our Lord. "Is this Brother Alphonse?"

Having been assured that the librarian was

indeed present, He inquired into the quality of his service. There was a moment of profound silence.

"I have nothing to say," muttered Satan as he lowered his eyes, utterly abashed.

At this terrible crisis in the proceedings, Brother Guido awoke trembling. Could this be his pallet, and those his four walls, he wondered? What a relief! To reassure himself, he arose and opened the door to look up and down the corridor. The night air was rushing down it from an open window and the great clock ticked slowly. But it seemed that another door had creaked upon its hinges, though Brother Guido was too much aroused to give the matter a great deal of attention.

What if sleep was now out of the question? He waited for morning with the best of resolutions and a penitent renunciation of the project for giving the scarecrows a patron. "I have lacked seriousness," became his final verdict against himself. "Now I must make haste to gain the friendship of Brother Alphonse and borrow a few of his books. I will name the winesaps after the Twelve Apostles. I will . . ."

The trend of reflection thus begun was interrupted by the rising-bell. At Mass, however, Brother Guido edified those who knelt near him

by the unction of his manner in making the responses. Never had he followed the reading at breakfast with such minute attention, in spite of the fact that the subject happened to be the career of a saintly scholar. The morning went by, however, without overtures to Brother Alphonse. Indeed, the precise manner of approach to this—in the flesh—somewhat forbidding person remained closely shrouded in mystery.

But at precisely half after one in the afternoon, Brother Guido addressed to an unattentive sparrow the following cheerful words: "I have it—I have just the right thing! I'll tell him how I have named the trees."

Forthwith he hastened to select the stockiest among the winesaps for Saint Peter's patronage. A somewhat doubtful tree he named Thomas; the shapeliest one became John. All went well, and in another hour or so the essential details had been committed to memory. It was at this happy moment that Brother Alphonse appeared on his chosen path. Strange to relate, the librarian's meditations lacked something of their usual melancholy: he seemed determined upon something, though unable quite to make up his mind about it. For a moment his eyes rested with what seemed benignity upon a bluejay.

These unusual circumstances remained practi-

cally unknown to Brother Guido, however. He was aflame with suppressed pacifism. Staking everything upon impetuosity, he put down his hoe very abruptly and rushed pell-mell toward his confrère.

"Brother Alphonse," he exclaimed breathlessly, "I want to say good afternoon!"

"Good afternoon, *frater mi,*" replied the other with learning and extraordinary cordiality.

"There is something I want to tell you. Perhaps you will be interested? It is about how I have named the trees along this path. Those"—he pointed to the winesaps—"are the Twelve Apostles. The others are the holy men of our order, in which it has pleased Heaven to enroll me, unworthy as I am."

"It is an excellent idea," was the encouraging response. "It is a beautiful idea!"

"There is another matter," continued Brother Guido with an outpouring of confidence. "I've thought I might do something with the vines and even the cabbages—as well as for myself, you know—if I knew more about everything. And so—and so I have decided to ask you whether you would be kind enough to point out the books in your most excellent library which would be likely to help me."

The gaunt librarian was momentarily taken

aback by this request, for Brother Guido's visits to the storehouse of knowledge had been abnormally few. But he declared his eagerness to be of service and even suggested that a work entitled *The Language of the Flowers* (in three volumes) might be the very thing.

The giant proportions of literature did not astonish Brother Guido nearly so much as the cordiality of the librarian. "You will be my second good angel!" he predicted fervently.

Brother Alphonse coughed, but it was not because he was suffering from a cold. "On the contrary, *frater mi,*" he said modestly, "it is I who must ask a great favor of you. Would such a thing be possible as that I might help a little in the garden? Could I weed the—the onions?"

The onion patch was really as clean as a new habit; but it was another circumstance which caused the gardener to stare up in undisguised amazement. Until that hour the librarian had never displayed more than a dietetic interest in onions.

"Why certainly, Brother!" he gasped. "And if there is anything you would like to eat. . . ."

The convert to agriculture shook his head with a smile. Then he placed a hand on Brother Guido's shoulder. "Come now, I want to ask you something important," he said. "Do you suppose

that—after a while, of course—one of the sparrows might eat from my hand? Do you?"

Though the gardener felt somewhat dubious, he shouldered full responsibility for the birds of the air and proclaimed their eagerness, in time, to take their meals wherever Brother Alphonse might desire. For (as he remarked) a bird is sometimes sociable and always hungry.

"Then there is another thing," continued the convert. "Do you suppose, Brother Guido, that you could teach me a song? I might be a little hoarse at first, but gradually there would be improvement."

He coughed. But a radiant smile of understanding covered the face of Brother Guido and erupted in a glorious laugh. Then suddenly he took out his box and offered a pinch of snuff. And before the librarian had finished sneezing over this unwonted indulgence, he was encouraged to join in the song.

"The sun is in the blue, blue grapes,
Our souls with sunlight shine:
Oh, happy, happy we shall be,
A-drinking mellow wine."

Though Brother Alphonse's interpretation of the melody was erroneous and creaky, it was heart-

ily applauded. For Brother Guido still rejoiced and gasped over an intuition. A door *had* creaked on its hinges, he remembered.

"It must be that you have had a dream, my brother," he said gently.

"You also?" asked the librarian after he had been silent for a long while.

"We are going to have great times together!" declared Brother Guido.

"Great times, indeed," responded Brother Alphonse.

The sun lighted the spires of the church, thus mingling glory with peace. And they, looking up, believed that Saint Francis has ways of guiding his children.

II. A Matter of Science

FTEN, when twilight seems to have wrapped the monastery of Saint Bonaventure in an impenetrable veiling, the spire of the church rises up and up like a solemn sign; and if there is any starlight, it is caught upon the gilded cross as jewels are set in a strong sword. Underneath, however, all things are bathed in peace; and because the heart that follows the rule of love is most tenderly human, it takes care that the sound of mirth be not a strange or lonely thing. For though a smile may smooth over the heart that festers, under the hale skin of laughter there is no incurable disease. . . .

For a long time after they had been visited by the dreams which laid bare their shortcomings, Brother Guido and Brother Alphonse lived side by side in the spirt of exalted mutual benevolence. Almost any afternoon while the autumn weather lasted, you might have seen the librarian doing his best to help harvest onions, potatoes or turnips; and in the morning you were as likely as

not to catch a glimpse of the gardener holding in his hands some edifying volume from the shelves. Why, there were rumors to the effect that Brother Alphonse had sung a melody not in the psalter, and that a bird—the species was never ascertained—had once condescended to sit on his cowl. But all men have their differences. And it happened that upon a certain afternoon in late February a dispute broke out in the cloister garden.

"No, you are wrong there," said Brother Alphonse gently. "It is true that the ichthyosaurus vanished from the face of the earth because Noah could not get him into the ark. But that he lived is a different matter. We are sure of that."

Brother Guido persisted pleasantly but robustly in the opinion that ichthyosauri were creatures of the imagination.

"Nowadays people like to believe such things," he affirmed stoutly. "Well, let them! On the cathedral of Cologne there are dozens of monsters that nobody has seen excepting in dreams. And though dreams may be very useful when they tell us something about saints and holy angels," he added reminiscently, "they are of no account when it comes to animals. That is why we have science. Why, I myself—"

"Oh, I don't suppose I can convince you," the

librarian conceded sadly. "And yet it is quite true that the ichthyosaurus was really on the earth."

They had been reading a large book devoted to beasts and birds, now that Brother Guido had completed the second volume of that imposing and edifying treatise known as *The Language of the Flowers*. Ever so many things had been learned, because the cloister gardener has little to attend to during the winter excepting the preparation of seed, binding up trees against the frost, and shoveling snow from the path between the row of apple trees where, because of the warm sunlight, the Reverend Superior takes his morning walk.

"We shall have to submit the matter to a person of authority," Brother Alphonse decided after a moment of reflection. "But it is hard to tell who that person ought to be."

"Father Leo," suggested the gardener.

They agreed. Father Leo was a little, bent-over man who ran hither and thither with his nose in the wind, forever in search of a new insect, especially a new butterfly. He seemed just the person they wanted, not only because he was really an authority on matters of science, but also because Brother Guido had once received his enthusiastic thanks for the gift of a great yellow and purple bug.

One detail quite escaped their notice, however. Father Leo had a most elusive sense of humor. When the two brothers presented their difficulty, the little priest's eyes twinkled: he was really very fond of Guido, whose love of nature in the truest sense was as evident as the tail on a cat, and to Alphonse he felt indebted for constant and careful service. His lips squirmed for a moment and then took up position as a masked battery of scientific gravity.

"H-m, you have run into a difficult problem there," he said gravely. "For myself, I've never been able to decide whether the ichthyosaurus really existed or whether somebody invented him. Of course, it is a very interesting question and you ought to settle it as soon as you can. Let me see . . . isn't there somebody around who could help you?"

"We can't think of any one excepting yourself, Father," declared Brother Alphonse most respectfully. "The scientists are few."

"Now there is one authority on such matters in the monastery, though you probably haven't realized it," affirmed the priest after a thoughtful moment. "Father Superior is just the man to help you."

"The Father Superior!" murmured the two brothers in unison.

For them the Superior was a man of unapproachable dignity, who directed their lives and assigned obediences, but who was far above even such lofty scientific interests as the problem created by the ichthyosaurus.

"Why not?" questioned the priest swiftly. "I won't hear a word about your declining to ask him. Not a word! He will consider the question an honor, and in addition he will answer it better than any one else could."

With some trepidation the brothers finally decided to appeal to this august authority. Nevertheless, when they first stood on tiptoe before the cell of the Father Superior, a placard informed them that he was absent from the monastery and would not return before two weeks. The delay was regrettable but it strengthened their resolve. Again and again they debated the question. It led to new subjects of scientific speculation, none of which presented, however, any obstacle so formidable as the ichthyosaurus.

Soon after the Father Superior's return—it was then early March—he was greeted one evening by the most timid of knocks upon the door of his office. In answer to his hearty "Come in!" Brother Alphonse and Brother Guido presented themselves. After the customary salutations of the order had been exchanged. they proceeded to

explain the weighty scientific problem which had engaged their attention and to state that upon the advice of Father Leo they had ventured to come even here.

"Well, well!" said the Father Superior. He was a very pious priest and an able executive. He could direct a growing community with exceptional skill. But his laughter was pleasant also in the sight of God.

He asked his guests to take chairs, looked at them thoughtfully for a moment, and then declared: "It is good to see that you are interested in the things of the mind, because I know that you will always make the proper use of your knowledge. But this question is really very difficult. Theoretically, I feel sure the ichthyosaurus existed; practically—well he probably did not. And so both of you are partly right."

He paused for a moment and his auditors gravely nodded their heads in harmony. It was a perfect settlement of their problem. Theoretically, one had gained a victory; practically, the other had been right.

"Now I should like to ask, what led you to take so deep an interest in these matters?" the Father Superior inquired gently.

Brother Alphonse began to explain and Brother Guido took up the thread of discourse when

his confrère had awkwardly broken it off. But finally it became evident that a satisfactory conclusion could be arrived at only by making a clean breast of everything. Therefore the dreams were related with great solemnity of detail. The Father Superior said little or nothing during the course of these revelations; occasionally, however, there was a suspicious softness in his eyes as he turned them in the direction of the open window through which there stirred a warm breeze that had come over miles and miles of meadow where the grass was of mingled brown and green.

"It is all very interesting," he asserted warmly when the story had been told. "Now, then, I should like to ask you a question, Brother Guido. Have you ever seen an elephant?"

"Yes, I have seen several of them," replied the brother thoughtfully. "Five or six at the same time, in fact. And one was eighty-five years old!"

"Did he show his age?"

"Well, he was very wrinkled," Brother Guido answered cautiously.

"There was a reason why I asked," continued the Superior. "On next Thursday somebody will have to drive to Hammond for a parcel we are to receive. It happens that on this same day there is to be a circus parade—with animals and every-

thing. I have decided to send the two of you. By looking carefully at the camels, the lions and the hippopotamus, you may develop a greater familiarity with the subject you are studying. At least I should think it ought to be helpful."

Quite unable to express their thanks, the two brothers went out. All that week they made excited preparations for the great scientific expedition that was to come; and because the earliest buds and wild flowers were peeping out, Brother Guido decided to carry Volume II of *The Language of the Flowers* in the folds of his habit. The omniscience and unction of this work had thoroughly charmed him.

The great day finally dawned. Early in the morning the brothers seated themselves in a light wagon drawn by Assisi, a steed so patient and deliberate with the wisdom of age that guiding him to anything required only a tranquil disposition. But both men saw so much of interest in the landscape through which they passed and found so many things to discuss that the journey did not seem at all longer than it should have seemed.

At length they came into the town, along the streets of which walked all sorts of people waiting for the circus. A throng of vehicles crowded the thoroughfares adjoining the one that had been

reserved for the parade; and Brother Guido was compelled to tie Assisi to a rail really quite some distance from the scene of tumult.

"What do you suppose we had better do?" he asked in some perplexity. "We must keep an eye on the wagon and an eye on the parade. And that is hard to manage."

"We must separate," decided Brother Alphonse. "Afterward, when the parade comes, it will be safe to leave Assisi by himself."

It was decided, therefore, that Brother Alphonse would mount guard while Brother Guido would patrol the territory and return at the moment of readiness. As a matter of fact, the librarian quickly settled himself in the wagon and began to recite the Joyful Mysteries—those blessed Mysteries with which the opening season seemed to harmonize most pleasantly. Soon he was far away from city streets and circus parades, in the tranquil land of meditation that is an open kingdom for the simple and clean of heart.

As for Brother Guido, having found the crowd too dense, he decided to circumvent it by going down a quiet street and then up to the main highway. While he walked along, his eyes were suddenly confronted with a giant shrub of a species he had not encountered since boyhood. This marvel of natural beauty stood proudly on a plot of

its own inside an elderly picket fence; and Brother Guido could not repress an exclamation of deep delight.

"What have we here?" he questioned, as if the treasure were unknown, and suddenly recalled that the second volume of *The Language of the Flowers* lay within his habit. Having extracted the precious book, Brother Guido began to search, and, beguiled by the excellent maxims and Scriptural quotations that graced every page, quite forgot the existence of circuses and worldly pageants of all kinds. When at length he discovered that the erudition of his author had included the shrub in question, his delight knew no bounds.

In fact it was not until people began to move along the street in noisy numbers that he remembered what had brought him here. Hastily he asked a little boy, who had touched his cap under the gaze of the portly Franciscan, whether the parade had started.

"Started!" exclaimed the youngster with a giggle. "Why, Brother! It's all done, but the circus will be this afternoon."

"Done? Is it all over?" demanded the brother with a spasm of remorse. "What will I do?"

There was nothing to do but return to the wagon and face the reproaches of his companion. During this melancholy retreat, Brother Guido

reflected upon the certain displeasure of the Father Superior, of the scientific loss involved in not having observed the elephants and the hippopotamus, and of the honor of the order, which had suffered at his hands. His dejection was boundless and bottomless.

But when he reached the wagon, Brother Alphonse greeted him so cordially that it seemed nothing had happened. "I didn't expect you back so soon," he remarked quietly, as he put his rosary into a pocket.

"But, Brother! It's all over!" replied the gardener on the verge of despair.

"What is all over?"

"Why, the parade. I forgot all about it until a boy came along and . . ."

"Ah . . . the parade! I also forgot all about it."

For a moment the two men suffered torment from visions of great scientific interest—lions and bears and camels and tigers with the tawniest of hides, all magnified and glittering—which they had failed to use profitably. Then they smiled at each other, as Saint Francis would have bidden them smile.

"Well, I think you had better get into the wagon," said Brother Alphonse. "It's time we were on our way."

Round about them on the homeward journey lay the goodly earth, wet with the moisture of March, and redolent of many things to come. As for the Father Superior, it is probable that he didn't mind. . . .

III. The Wolf of Gubbio

HE village which lies immediately below Saint Bonaventure's, and to which the road comes by a very adroit angle, has its share of worthy souls. There used to be an old cobbler who sang ballads while he hammered away; and you may come across a legend which relates how an exiled Polish nobleman lived next to the post office and sold medicines. But it is also true, unfortunately enough, that once in a while a villager hardens his heart. He becomes stingy or even averse to climbing the hill on Sunday, and then it is only natural that he should view the Franciscans with a muddy eye. Generally such a one will confine himself to talk, which is not so dangerous as artillery but does disturb the atmosphere. Now and then, however, that attack becomes disagreeably concrete, as you shall see.

Brother Exuper, a person of slender build and very innocent eyes, used to pass the door of old Andrew Slower almost every afternoon at four o'clock. It was then that the brother officially

collected whatever telegrams might have come to the village for Saint Bonaventure's. This mission was surely one of importance and trust.

"Good afternoon, Mr. Slower!" the brother would say very cheerfully whenever old Andrew was visible in the doorway or moved about the yard.

Mr. Slower, however, always mumbled an inarticulate reply which, to tell the truth, was profane. Then he would go in and say to his wife, "Bah, I wish that donkey of a Franciscan would keep his mouth shut!"

"Andrew," she would reply wearily, "it is wrong of you to——"

"Bah!"

From this it is apparent how slight was the esteem of Mr. Slower for Brother Exuper. In fact, it amounted to nothing at all. The reason was very simple: a sermon had been preached at Saint Bonaventure's one Sunday about the unjust steward, and Mr. Slower, who was unfamiliar with Biblical narratives and had been in control of a lake steamer during three consecutive summers, fancied that the address had been aimed at him personally. His wife vainly tried to explain. The postmaster made a similar effort and lost his temper.

"I am going to keep the enemy—that hypo-

crite!—away from here if I don't do another thing," continued Mr. Slower. "Just you watch me."

"I'm pretty sure you won't do another thing!" the mistress of the household retorted sharply.

"Bah!"

Thereupon old Andrew went off into the country and returned with a mongrel mastiff who growled at everything, including his own shadow. Mrs. Slower wept, the cat stiffened every hair on her back, and the neighbors grumbled: but the ferocious mastiff took up his abode and snarled therein. Of mornings the brute and his master retreated to a small shed in the rear of the house and waited for Brother Exuper to pass by.

"See?" Mr. Slower would inquire, pointing to the brown figure on the highway. "All hands on deck!"

To this the mastiff would reply with a blood-curdling growl.

Finally there came a morning when old Andrew, having received an answer to his question, released his hold. The dog rushed forward, but, luckily enough, was caught sight of just in time by the intended victim. Down the street Brother Exuper raced, with a speed for which the world had not looked to him until that time. It was, indeed, a surprise to the brother himself. And he

managed to get into the post office at the precise moment when his pursuer was within an inch of the rear flounce of his habit. There ensued such a tirade on the part of a portly lady across the street that the mastiff decided to hurry back home.

"That is what I would call a narrow escape," Brother Exuper commented, out of breath.

"Folks ought not to be allowed to keep critters like that one there!" the postmaster grumbled, as he shook a fist. "We'll see about that. Think of such a dog loose among people."

The brother selected another route for his return trip, and indeed was even then constantly examining the horizon for devouring monsters. He arrived quite safe, however, and presented the telegram to his superior without comment. But that night at meditation, his mind kept recalling the story of the Wolf of Gubbio. How could a mere dog be compared with such a wolf? Saint Francis had calmed even the beasts of the forest; why, then, should he—Brother Exuper—permit himself to be routed by a domestic animal? It did seem inconsistent with the spirit of the Order. It did disturb the conscience. The brother was puzzled.

"I must make friends with that dog!" he concluded resolutely that night in his cell. But when the next morning came, it seemed obvious that

friendship alone would not suffice. The mastiff slowly began to reassume the terrific proportions of the previous afternoon. Brother Exuper therefore went to the butcher and begged two small scraps of beef. After some delay these were forthcoming, wrapped in a shred of brown paper. Thus armed, the brother set out.

"Good afternoon!" he said to an old lady coming up the hill. "No, it's too nice to ride," he said to a farmer in a wagon going down hill. In fact, it was such a charming day that he felt like racing into the village and shouting a hymn of joy.

Nevertheless his eyes were valiantly watchful, and sure enough! no sooner had he passed the gate of Mr. Slower than the shaggy brute appeared on the run. Brother Exuper, with his hand on the paper, took four swift steps. Then he cast upon the ground first one piece of beef and then another.

"There!" he informed his enemy, with some uneasiness.

The mastiff wavered in his purpose. He remembered the principle of obedience, but he was not above bribery. What was this? Meat? It had been a long time since that had come his way without taking to its heels. The mastiff, therefore, like the unjust steward, took what he could get. Then shrewdly he decided to look further

into the matter, and tagged the brother, peaceably enough, even to the post office.

Mr. Slower, who had been informed of the previous day's adventure, greeted the return of his servant with no realization of the treason done. He patted the mastiff on the shoulder; he even went so far as to offer him a potato with gravy—that being all the kitchen would surrender.

Twice more did Brother Exuper cautiously obtain beef from the butcher; and twice again did the mastiff decide to declare a truce. "Nice dog, nice dog!" now became the tenor of a flattering conversation lasting from the hedge near Mr. Slower's gate even to the post office, although the brother still entered this building with an agreeable feeling. But now, in spite of everything, he had taken an interest in the beast; and so he appropriated bacon rinds or what not from the table, for the solace of his one-time opponent.

Meanwhile old Andrew had grown somewhat suspicious of the enterprise. "Now, why doesn't that skeleton in a holy blanket stop coming this way, I wonder?" he asked himself in perplexity.

Indeed there was some reason for believing that either the brother was very much in love with exercise, or that—but old Andrew still refused to consider the alternative. Nevertheless, when he had launched his attack on the following

day, he waited a few moments and then walked cautiously to the front of the house. What was his astonishment to see Brother Exuper coming calmy down the road with the ferocious mastiff tripping amiably at his side!

"—— —— ——," were the unquotable remarks of the ex-steward to himself.

"Good afternoon, Mr. Slower," the brother chirped amiably.

Old Andrew could restrain himself no longer. He was on the verge of bursting with curiosity. "Aren't you at all afraid of my—the dog?" he demanded bluntly.

"Afraid, Mr. Slower!" chided Brother Exuper proudly. "Now why on earth should I be afraid? You can see for yourself that Fido and I are the very best of friends. We walk to the post office and back—just like this—every day. *Almost* every day, that is."

And the Brother stooped to stroke the shaggy back. Old Andrew, however, recalled only too well how he himself had been forced to seek refuge behind the farmer from whom he had made the purchase. He recalled distinctly also that on at least one occasion the brother had taken to flight.

"That dog has a mighty rotten temper, Brother," he ventured to state. "I know that.

Almost bit a chunk out of me, he did. Now how did you manage to get chummy with him? That's what I'd like to know, Brother."

The brother looked up the shady road toward Saint Bonaventure's. Perhaps what he was going to say lacked a certain element of sheer truth. But clearly there could be no harm in singing the praises of a Saint.

"Haven't you ever heard the story of the Wolf of Gubbio, Mr. Slower?" he suggested. "It's rather a common story, you know."

"No, I never did," old Andrew confessed.

"Well, then, it was Saint Francis who tamed the Wolf of Gubbio so that they became the best of friends. And mind you, the Wolf had gone so far as to eat a man! He was the terror of the whole neighborhood. Why, anybody can tell you about the Wolf!"

"But," the old man remarked very correctly, "you are not Saint Francis."

Brother Exuper smiled very humbly. "Of course I'm not," he admitted. "But neither is Fido the Wolf of Gubbio."

Which, in its turn, was a remark containing much wisdom. And as if to show his approval, the mastiff sprawled out on the grass. A look of placid benevolence covered his murderous countenance.

"I'll tell you one thing, Brother," declared Mr. Slower impetuously. "If you can tame critters like him—and I'm darned if I know how you do it—perhaps you can even do something with me. I'm a vile old sinner, Brother. Haven't swabbed the deck all season."

Such a confession, in the village and at four o'clock in the afternoon, quite took Brother Exuper's breath away. "Why you're not! I'm sure you're not—very bad, Mr. Slower," he said cheerfully. "But perhaps you had better come up some time and see about it."

Old Andrew abruptly changed the conversation, however. He called to his wife and presented her to the Franciscan with a little flourish. Then he invited him inside for coffee, and related several stories about the lakes. All in all he proved an excellent host and delayed the brother almost an hour.

After that Mr. Slower was always sure to be in his yard at the precise hour in the afternoon when telegrams were available. "Good afternoon," the brother would say; and the steward's reply was invariably long and involved. Afterward the mastiff gravely made the trip to the post office and back again, finally becoming so docile and exemplary a beast that even the fat lady in the green house spoke of him in terms of esteem.

All of which gave Brother Exuper quantities of food for thought.

Not so very late in the season, a salesman appeared in the village and even in Mr. Slower's front yard. He was trying to sell a lawn-mower, nicely painted in green and red. As a matter of fact, Mr. Slower was just on the verge of surrender. Then Brother Exuper passed by, with his customary greeting. The mastiff, however, being interested in the business venture, did not stir from his place.

"Another one of them lazy friars," muttered the salesman, who had overheard a rumor to the effect that Mr. Slower was not a man of piety. "I can't understand why folks keep on feeding them, can you?"

"He isn't lazy!" old Andrew declared doggedly.

"Oh, not when it comes to——"

The salesman was on the very edge of a wink when his customer demanded abruptly: "You'd better clear out of here. I don't want your lawn-mower!"

"But——"

"Get out of here!" shouted Mr. Slower.

Then he reached down and shook the mastiff by the collar. "There!" he suggested irately. With a growl the beast obediently rose to his feet. In consternation the salesman dropped his wares

at the hedge and ran. Down the street he tore for dear life, with the pursuing patter close at his heels. Past the post office the chase continued, arousing the villagers and bringing the fat lady to her door once more. At length the salesman reached the open country. A small pond rippled at the edge of the highway. Into it he plunged, and the mastiff followed. He was a dog of his word.

Suddenly a voice rang out at the water's edge. "Fido, come here! Fido!"

It was Brother Exuper. Thus summoned, the valiant mastiff cocked an ear, growled, courteously withdrew, and accompanied the Franciscan back to the village. In fact, they reached Mr. Slower's residence without further catastrophe.

"Brother," said the old man meekly after he had listened to a short address of reproach, "I think we had better come to some kind of an understanding. You see, that dog and me are too much alike. It's a bad partnership, this one is. And so I have made up my mind to give him to you, Brother."

"Oh, really——"

He wanted to say that certain formalities were in order before a dog of any kind could be admitted to the monastery. But Mr. Slower gave him no chance to explain.

"That will be all right, Brother," he said reassuringly. "I paid a certain sum for him, but never mind it, Brother. Take him as a gift, free of duty. Only, I want to shake your hand, Brother!"

And so Brother Exuper, somewhat nonplussed, set out for the monastery with the monstrous mastiff at his side. What should he say to the Father Superior? What impression would the dog make for himself? But the Brother could arrive at no definite conclusion.

At first, indeed, the Father Superior was utterly negative. When he had listened to the complete history of the mastiff, however, he suddenly smiled and changed his mind. He knew more about Mr. Slower than even Brother Exuper, and he was really friendly to both dogs and men. Accordingly he gave his consent to the official adoption of Fido.

For a long while the two—Franciscan and mastiff—went everywhere together. And during his life, as well as long after his sad demise, the shaggy beast was referred to as the Wolf of Gubbio.

IV. Wanted—A Name

S you go along the corridors of St. Bonaventure's any time during the day, you are sure to notice the great number of little things being done. This monastery is really a very complicated house, in which scrubbing and polishing are always in order. And it is just as true that wherever St. Bonaventure's touches the life which is lived in its neighborhood, it seems to be working with a human broom and dust-pan. People will allow cobwebs to settle round in their minds, they will keep the windows of their hearts barred and muddy, in spite of all rules to the contrary. Nine times out of ten, too, improvement is merely a matter of better housekeeping. A word in the right place; a deed neatly done; and a life which stared at you like a deserted dwelling has lights in the windows and a vine over the door. If you are inclined to doubt this, St. Bonaventure's can prove it by ever so many examples.

Brother Augustine mopped his forehead with a clean handkerchief. It was really a very warm

day, and the Father Superior had just said: "Brother, I think you'd better see Mr. Balthasar and settle for the milk."

Mr. Balthasar was the farmer from whom the monastery purchased whatever it needed in the way of dairy supplies. He was really a pleasant enough person, and the brother enjoyed dealing with him. Therefore he hastened to look over the account and see how much money would be needed.

"On the first, ten gallons, two quarts of milk," he began to repeat. "Isn't it really surprising how much we use? And on the second, the same, besides twenty pounds of butter."

And so it went on. When the thirty-one days had been carefully checked, Brother Augustine came to the conclusion that Mr. Balthasar was a fortunate man indeed. With so much revenue coming in steadily, what was there to worry about in life? It seemed certain that in ten years the farmer could retire and build a handsome residence, if he cared to do a thing of that sort.

"Yes, he is a lucky man!" the brother stated to himself as he approached the farm and looked admiringly at the neat buildings behind which acres stretched into the distance.

"Why, good afternoon, Brother Augustine," the farmer called, getting up from his chair on

the porch and hurrying to the gate with an outstetched hand. "I'm mighty glad to see you! Come right up and sit down."

They shook hands and walked towards the house without the brother's being able to explain this extraordinary depth of feeling on the part of his host.

"It's warm, isn't it?" he asked. "But I suppose that is what you farmers need for the crops."

"Yes," Mr. Balthasar admitted without the slightest enthusiasm.

"Well, you know I am here to settle for the milk and so forth. If you have time to look at the figures——"

"Brother. . . . Have you a minute?"

It was plain that the most prosperous dairy-farmer in the neighborhood of St. Bonaventure's had something on his mind. It was no less plain that he wanted to get it off.

"Is there something else you'd like to talk about, Mr. Balthasar?" the Franciscan asked calmly.

"Yes, Brother, there is. And something important, too," was the reply. "We are having a terrible time about a matter that really shouldn't cause us any trouble at all. You see. . . . But will you be kind enough to come into the house?"

For reasons of curiosity no less than of friend-

ship, the brother agreed readily. They walked into the living room where Mrs. Balthasar was seated in a rocker, obviously unable to find peace of soul. She and the Franciscan bowed to each other with mutual respect.

"Now you see it's this way," the farmer went on to explain. "We have just received from Heaven another little boy. He is eight days old."

"Eight days!" Brother Augustine observed, as if it were a fact of striking importance.

"But we can't find a name for the child, and of course he can't be baptized without a name, can he? What are we going to do?"

Both Mr. and Mrs. Balthasar shook their heads in perplexity.

"Now surely there are a good many names in this world," the Brother answered philosophically. "*That* shouldn't cause you much trouble."

"But you don't understand the situation, Brother," the mother of the household objected. "You see, we have ten children now, and they're all boys. The others have used up all the good names, and I simply will not have the youngest—the darling!—just take any old thing that happens to be left."

Her husband pointed out that they already had a John, a Francis, a Peter, a George and quite

a number of others. Clearly they couldn't have two with the same name, even if he did think Ignatius would be satisfactory.

"Ignatius! Goodness, that wouldn't do at all!" Mrs. Balthasar insisted. "Just imagine a priest —or a man running for President—with the name, Ignatius Balthasar."

"Well, have it your own way!" the farmer grumbled into his chin. "But I do know that some time before we are dead that child has got to have a name."

It was easy to see that a certain amount of argument on the subject had already come to pass, and that more might possibly be in prospect. Brother Augustine therefore racked his brains for a solution of the difficulty. He thought of this name and that, but none seemed melodious enough to win the day. Besides, it was hard to settle such a question on the spur of the moment.

"Would it be too much trouble to let me see the boy?" he suggested finally.

"Why certainly you may see him," both the fond parents agreed at once.

When the procession had halted beside a little wicker cradle, Brother Augustine looked down upon a little face that was all puckered innocence. His heart suddenly jumped with a kind of explosive tenderness; and he felt that nothing on earth,

either in the matter of names or otherwise, could be too attractive for the sleeping baby. And so an idea came into his mind.

"Suppose we settle the thing right away," he said when they had tiptoed back into the living room. "I will go out and find one or two people who are authorities on the subject of names; and with their help we ought surely to find something suitable. It's high time the dear child was being baptized, you know."

"It's a fine idea," Mr. Balthasar agreed immediately.

"All right," Mrs. Balthasar consented, after a moment's hesitation.

And so Brother Augustine hurried out to the road, and along the short distance to the village. Luck was with him, because the first person he met happened to be Father Lawrence, a very austere and canonical priest. To him the Brother related what had come to pass at the Balthasars'. Instantly Father Lawrence scowled over the silver rims of his spectacles.

"The idea, the *very* idea!" he said. "Why, that child must be christened right away. I will hurry over, Brother."

With so much accomplished, Brother Augustine went directly to see Mr. Butler, the notary-public, in whose office there was a large and imposing

dictionary, with names in plenty. The notary happened to be just as busy as usual, so that he was most willing to be of assistance. In just another minute, the dictionary, Brother Augustine and the notary were on the road to the scene of struggle.

"That is all very well, Father Lawrence," the lady of the house was saying as they entered. "It is true—of course it is true!—that my dear baby must be baptized. But how can he be without a name? Now if you can think of a decent one——"

"Oh, that is beside the point," the priest replied severely. "There are plenty of names."

He went on to enumerate a few, but Mrs. Balthasar sniffed and frowned at each and every one of them. A feeling of tenseness had somehow got into the air, and the poor husband was walking up and down shaking his head. It was a distinct relief when Brother Augustine entered with the notary.

"Here we are," the brother went on to declare. "It ought to be easy now for us to settle this question. Mr. Butler has brought with him a dictionary in which there are any number of names. We need only listen while he reads the list, and mark those which seem best. Don't you think so?"

"Yes," said Mr. Balthasar, his wife and Father Lawrence in turn.

The notary coughed and opened the enormous volume. He was more than a little abashed by the presence of so learned a priest, and besides he always read aloud with a feeling that people would say, "My! Isn't he getting bald."

"Names of men," he read in a high voice. "Ahasuerus, Alastor, Apollo, Apulieus——"

"Oh, none of those will do at all!" Mrs. Balthasar exclaimed, putting her hands over her ears. "Who ever heard such horrible names?"

"I'm afraid that is a very profane book," Father Lawrence observed severely. And opening his breviary, he began to enumerate a few of the Saints: "Achilleus, Alexander, Anictetus——"

"Please stop, Father!" Mrs. Balthasar begged, quite out of patience.

"Perhaps if I were permitted to read a little farther?" the notary suggested, with a modest desire to be useful.

But such a violent dispute followed that opportunities for reading were few indeed. Mr. Balthasar lost his temper, declaring his readiness to baptize the child personally, name or no name. What followed this announcement had better be left to the imagination; and Brother Augustine, utterly nonplussed, decided to retreat.

Gently he entered the chamber where the most recent of the Balthasars still slept in his cradle. Who would have supposed so pink and lovable a mite could cause such a riot of differing opinions? The Brother bent over the cradle and smiled. "Is the poor little thing always to go without a name?" he wondered.

Outside the voices continued. "I tell you—" "I must admit—" and similar phrases were tossed about at random. Then a strange impulse took possession of Brother Augustine. It held him tighter and tighter: he tried to pretend it wasn't there, only to feel it thumping him on the back immediately afterwards. How infinitely precious the child looked, in its cradle! The Brother thought of Bethlehem, and of words promising peace which the angels had sung on a starry night. He recalled Saint Anthony and the Guest who had once come to lie in his arms. Then he quickly tiptoed back to the scene of battle.

"Have you made up your minds?" he asked genially.

"It is impossible to get anything done, in this house!" Mr. Balthasar replied.

"Oh, let's do *something!*" the wife answered in despair. "You people will make me a nervous wreck, with your constant talking, talking—all day long!"

As for Father Lawrence and the notary, they had shrouded themselves in silence.

"Well, suppose you try my plan," Brother Augustine suggested cheerfully. "It is simple and can't help turning out right. Now I shall put a number of paper slips with names on them into a hat. Then Mrs. Balthasar can draw one."

"Oh!" she said thoughtfully.

Finally everybody agreed that the plan would be satisfactory; and the mother was even elated by the fact that *she* would draw the name. Brother Augustine therefore withdrew to a desk, cut a sheet of paper into some two dozen slips, and then wrote on each with great earnestness.

"Now, once you have drawn, you must agree not to look at the other slips," he stipulated. "That might make you change your mind. And then we should have to begin all over."

Mrs. Balthasar agreed that the rule was only fair. And while the others stood round waiting in anxious silence, her hand fluttered to the outstretched hat and drew forth a slip. Eagerly she opened it.

"Augustine!" she said critically. "How does that sound . . . Augustine Balthasar. Oh, I like that!"

Indeed, it seemed to satisfy all those present. A much more serene atmosphere settled upon the

room, and as if by common agreement the little crowd stole into the adjoining chamber and gathered round the cradle. The child still slept, as unconcerned now that he had a name as he had been during the period of his stormy incognito.

"Thank you, Brother," Mrs. Balthasar exclaimed warmly, when they had all tiptoed out again. "If it hadn't been for you, I really don't know what we could have done."

"Oh, it's nothing," Brother Augustine insisted. "Nothing at all."

Nevertheless, he seemed uncommonly fidgety when he and the farmer came finally to settling the bill. At the moment he was utterly incapable of telling whether milk was sold by the gallon or the pound. Fortunately, Mr. Balthasar was now in a jovial mood, and even canceled part of the debt.

The Brother's excitement lasted all the way down the steps of the house, and up the long road to the monastery. He was thinking about the beauty of the child's name. Augustine:—that title belonged to them both, to the poor Franciscan and the rich farmer's son. And the tiny boy surely was a treasure.

When he reached the top of the hill, Brother Augustine took from his pocket the bundle of slips which had been in the hat, and sent them

fluttering off on the wind. Then a smile spread over his face, uniting ears, eyes and lips in one living image of joy.

"Ha, ha, ha," he told himself, "it really is a blessing she didn't look at more than one!"

For on each of the slips he had written the self-same name—Augustine.

V. Brother Benedict's Masterpiece

IT is really to be doubted if people anywhere in the world are so interesting as those who have hidden themselves away in St. Bonaventure's; but when older visitors to the monastery exchange memories and talk about the friars, somebody is sure to reach the climax by asking, "Did you know Brother Benedict?" You are very fortunate if you are able to answer "Of course," because it is not often that such a man turns up in this drab world. Brother Benedict seemed to have been hewn with great skill out of some living rock. His head was massive and his eyes always knew exactly what to make of anything which happened along. He also had a beard, the grayish profusion of which could not hide the fact that his lips were singularly adapted to honesty and straightforwardness. You looked at him, and then you wondered who he could have been in his other life.

One afternoon—so long ago that it would be hard to tell exactly when—Brother Benedict took

three steps back from the canvas he was painting and shook his head. "There can be no end to such a work," he muttered. "I will have to paint twenty-four more souls to fill the canvas. And the worst of it is, they are all alike—every one alike!"

The little priest who sat near by smiled sympathetically. "I don't see why you think it hard to do," he said. "The subject is really very appealing—the yearning of the human soul. Only I would suggest, Brother, that you try to put just a little more suffering into their faces—or perhaps I should say, longing. We want people to look at the picture and pray, you know."

Indeed the suggestion was quite appropriate. The picture was to be a great tableau of Purgatory, for an altar in the crypt: but one soul at the extreme right wore an air of being altogether contented with her lot. This, under the circumstances, was most improbable.

"Yes, yes, Father," the painter replied with a frown. "But always I must paint gloom, more gloom. Nothing have I drawn in this monastery but long faces—hundreds of them! *Es ist zum schaudern.* And yet Saint Francis, when he talked to the Wolf of Gubbio or Brother Sun, was happy. Why must we paint as if Lent never came to an end?"

The little priest smiled again. Then he said gently,

"The yellow stars are like
Birds in the sky;
Love keeps them bright
And well Love might
Say to them, 'Fly!'

"My thoughts are wayward,
Struggling things:
Love, they do gauge
The hampering cage
With hungry wings."

"I do not understand you," declared Brother Benedict, going to work again. "But I hope you will not mind that?"

The little priest's songs were quite strange; but it is also true on the other hand that the brother himself was more than a little mysterious. There is a legend that upon a certain day in September, a dignified gentleman who let it be known that he was an officer in the Austrian army, called at St. Bonaventure's and saluted Brother Benedict very smartly upon his entry into the parlor.

The Franciscan's eyes (people say) lighted up momentarily, and then commanded firmly: "Go

tell your master that his son no longer lives. I am Brother Benedict." The envoy saluted once more, quite gravely, and then left without having taken anything to eat. But all of this is only hearsay.

It is positively certain, however, that the Brother had spent his boyhood in a small city near the Italian border. He was entirely an artist and talked during moments of enthusiasm about San Marco in Venice, and the great statue of Pope Julian in Florence. The fact that he had become a Franciscan rather than a member of some other community was due, in all likelihood, in his having fallen in love first with Fra Angelico and then with Padua.

One must admit, however, that Brother Benedict was not extraordinarily ascetic. He loved the brown shade of a new habit and complained when his aged to a lighter tint. Nor was he altogether content with the work he had to do, which was such frescoing and painting as the superiors would permit. They were disposed to look at his art rather critically since he had given two cherubim less drapery than perfect decorum requires.

"Would you have me put shoes on the holy angels?" he had demanded irately. At this the Father Superior looked stern; but being unable to assert definitely that footwear is customary in

Heaven, he made no reply excepting to say that the number of angels already painted was equal to the demand. Shortly thereafter Brother Benedict received so great an assignment of mournful themes that it seemed they could never reach an end. And he did want a chance to paint the Infant Saviour playing on the lily-dotted outskirts of Nazareth, or going to watch the farmers as they bound in sheaves the golden crop of grain. . . .

"I really think a great deal of you, Father Raphael," he declared again to the little priest. "One can always tell a good shoe from a bad one. Now there are some who preach of mortifying the flesh three Sundays in a row, while they themselves have appetites that might be the envy of kings. *Ach,* what do I say?"

"You were talking about appetites, Brother, and I am under obedience to find an appetite. Could you tell me where?" asked the priest whimsically.

Indeed he was a slight man, so frail that you almost expected him to dissolve under a stiff breeze. He had come to the monastery from a distant city, where the state of his health had alarmed his companions. Discipline had already separated him from the earthy world; but, strange to relate, he took the greatest delight in observing

the progress of Brother Benedict's hand. Besides, he was so deft that he could clean a palette and turn an easel without a trace of the carelessness which so often brought down the artist's ire upon a chance assistant.

When they parted this afternoon on the best of terms, Father Raphael gave himself to reflections upon art. Evidently he recognized some truth in Brother Benedict's point of view because he unconsciously walked about nodding his head. Without further ado he went to his Superior and very humbly stated that he should like to beg a favor. The Superior smiled benignantly and marked the place in his office-book.

"Reverend Father, you know there is in the monastery no good picture of our glorious patron and founder," continued Father Raphael. "Might it not be an excellent idea to give Brother Benedict a commission to make one? Perhaps it may even turn out to be a masterpiece, worthy of a shrine."

The Father Superior smiled at the exuberance of his guest. "Well, very well," he agreed then. But mindful of the painter's eccentricities he added, "In what attitude will the Saint appear?"

"I think it would be best, my Father, to portray the moment on Monte Averno when the stigmata were received."

"Yes, that is best," the Superior decided after a moment's reflection. "Tell Brother Benedict to paint his picture thus—and in no other way."

Rejoicing, Father Raphael went the next afternoon to bring the glad tidings to his friend. At first the good Brother was delighted, but when he learned that neither the birds nor the Wolf of Gubbio could be introduced into the portrait, he demurred strongly.

"But, Father, you forget that it will be impossible for me so to paint the Poverello that the stigmata seem to belong to him—not merely stuck on, you know. Of such high and sacred things I have no understanding, being only a sinful man. Good Lord, why will they not let me draw what I can draw?"

Father Raphael was not frightened by the fierceness of the question, however, and coaxed the artist, with soft words, to do his best. "I have my heart set on a great picture for the monastery, Brother," he said. "It really isn't so difficult once you get round to it. And besides I shall be here to give you advice."

"Of course," replied Brother Benedict with a condescending chuckle. But the priest's fervent interest made a deep impression upon him, and soon he was talking of certain paintings in Florence as if the enterprise were agreed upon. To-

gether they selected a canvas, arranged it upon an easel, and got ready the pigments and the brushes.

Unfortunately, after the first day's work had been completed, Father Raphael was confined to his bed; and Brother Benedict confronted the outline of the Saint's figure with something like despair. He worked hard for a while, but then effaced what had been done and put aside his palette. It was impossible for him to decide what to do next: the subject hung aloft in the clouds and his brush was unable to reach it.

"I simply don't know what to do," he muttered to himself quite despondently. "Bah, let it be as it is, for a while."

He therefore worked at another canvas until Father Raphael, apparently more frail than ever, appeared one morning and looked at the coveted picture with deep regret. "Why, Brother, things have come to a halt, haven't they?" he asked. But after the painter had made a bluff and unrelenting exposition of his difficulties, Father Raphael laughed and said, "I see that I must take charge, Brother. Now, then, all you have to do is—what I command."

Brother Benedict chuckled good-humoredly into his gray beard.

But the little priest began to speak so wisely and feelingly of Saint Francis that the artist, lis-

tening, was surprised to discover signs of life in the figure on the canvas. What had seemed impossible before, now half automatically grew easy. In two days the rough framework of the portrait had been completed, though the most difficult and intimate details still remained undone. And Father Raphael, delighted, stood before the easel and said softly:

"Beauty everlasting, brighter far than all
Noon-suns and stars, splendidly let fall
Thy glory from above:
Through stones in my heart's darkling wall,
Break, beautiful Love!
Cleanse me, rouse me, beatify, beautify me
That through Thy infinite, sweet immensity
I come, O Dove."

Of these mystical songs, which the priest made in number, Brother Benedict understood very little; but he realized, wondering more and more, that the eyes of his frail companion had a power over him unlike no other strength on earth—a power that lifted and straightened the soul.

It was, therefore, with a feeling nearly akin to awe that he went to resume his work on the next afternoon. Outside a long rain had darkened the sky, so that heavy shadows—like folds of immate-

rial velvet—crowded into the bare little studio. Brother Benedict came in and fumbled among his brushes, thinking so deeply about the task in hand that at first he did not notice the figure of Father Raphael, who was kneeling on the floor.

"My Father," he said softly then.

But as the priest did not answer, Brother Benedict supposed he did not wish to be disturbed. They were often so, these strange, unworldly men. Yet there was something in that rapt and wondrously delicate face—something which stirred the Brother as if it had been the ineffable trumpet of an angel heralding another world from the margent of the sky. He did not comprehend; but now he was to feel so great an awe, and such a yearning for the expression of mysteries inexpressible, that he grasped the brush with a new joy and vigor. It seemed to him then that light and music were crowding the air—that the great Canticle of his master had been scattered in radiant fragments upon the world.

"Domine, non sum dignus," he murmured with a swift, half-conscious realization that he was in the grip of supreme emotion. He painted, hardly knowing what was being painted. His skill and vigor were visible in the execution of every stroke, but that which was being said in color formed itself almost independently of his will. How long,

how feverishly he worked, the brother was never able to tell; but when the picture had been done, the shadows were really those of twilight and the hour of the stars had come. For the first time in his life, Brother Benedict had risen above earth-mists into the sharp, clear spaces of creative Truth. And Father Raphael? He knelt constantly, in a little place where there were stains made by pigments fallen from another canvas. Daubs of red and yellow lay round him like flowers.

"It is good so," whispered the brother at last. "Come, Father, and see what we have done!"

In his voice there were tears, jubilation, humility, awe. But the figure on the floor did not move. Anxiously Brother Benedict lighted the lamp and studied the quiet man, who had sunk together upon his tireless knees; then he knew the truth.

"Father Raphael!" he cried. In a moment he had run to call the others.

They filed in hastily, one by one, until a brown half-circle had hemmed in the kneeling priest and the luminous portrait that transcended the shadows and their sorrow. The Father Superior touched the forehead of the shrunken figure, and then bent his own head low. *"In te, Domine, confitemur,"* an old religious intoned in a breaking voice; and all responded until the end of the

psalm. Then quietly they passed out, bearing with them the body of their saint to his rest and resurrection. . . .

And there it stood, for a while, alone—the marvelous likeness of Saint Francis which is to-day the dearest treasure of the monastery. Through the darkness, one must believe, its mystical colors gleamed fervently—colors created in a moment of illumination which was also an hour of death. To-day you may see it and wonder at its beauty; but perhaps you ought to ask also for a glimpse of the poem which was found on Father Raphael's desk after he had gone:

All pleasure passes into pain
And loving lingers in regret.
The shining fields, at dawn-hour wet,
Are stubble to the harvest-wain.

A careless husbandman were God
If, ploughing, He turned not the sod.

Perhaps you would also like to know what happened to Brother Benedict. Strange to relate, it became impossible for him to draw anything; and he ended his days very humbly, very piously, painting the walls with a broad brush and tinting the floors, on his hands and knees.

But in his eyes lay a certain great peace.

VI. Brother Giles: His Monument

TTACHED to St. Bonaventure's is a small and tidy college for boys which it would never do to overlook if you are interested in the place. Indeed, the chances are you couldn't: the boys are such a yelping, rosy set of lads that they may safely be depended upon to advertise themselves. But the college! That is a rumbling beehive with many staircases and alcoves. Here you run smack into a picture gallery, and over there, in an evil-smelling little room, are the works and pomps of chemistry. It must be admitted also that boys occasionally have trouble with their stomachs, throats, and similar bodily portions—a fact long since taken for granted at St. Bonaventure's and provided against by an infirmary. This is a long room with nine beds all in a row, very white and actually inviting.

For twelve years Brother Giles had reigned in state over the infirmary. For twelve years boys with indigestion had swallowed his pills and laughed at his jokes. The same thing was true of

boys who had even more harrowing maladies. And though Brother Giles kept only a few medicines, he had a great variety of jokes.

"Now I suppose you've heard about the man who prayed that it would rain vinegar on his garden. Eh?" he might ask.

"No, I never did, Brother," a boy would answer, while feeling a strange itch in his ear.

"Well, now! You haven't heard about that? Why, he wanted the vegetables to agree with his wife's disposition."

Then Brother Giles would roar, and the boy would feel better. Of course it is well known that a born story-teller needs only encouragement; and so the marvelous repertory would unwind and unwind till the victim of sore throat or what not had undergone a jovial massage more helpful than all the drugs imaginable. There was one—a really atrocious one—about the German sexton who married the belle of the town, and a very complicated another concerning an elderly lady who had trouble with her eyelashes. But we should get nowhere trying to enumerate all these narratives. And we do want to get somewhere.

"Yes," Brother Giles was saying one afternoon to a freckled youngster who had stubbed his toe, "you boys would all be dead and in your graves

if it weren't for the wonders of science. Isn't that right?"

"Ow—ow, Brother!" replied the lad, though not directly to the question.

"What's that? What's that?"

It must be admitted that Brother Giles' methods were forceful. He squeezed the toe with manly vigor and applied, first hot water, and then iodine. What in the world could he have accomplished without iodine?

"Now this is nothing to make faces about!" he continued. "Just hurry along, and in another day you'll never dream you have a toe."

"Thanks a lot, Brother," said the lad weakly.

And he meant it. Being a very amiable youngster who had absorbed carefully the story of the nine ungrateful lepers, no sooner had the toe healed than he began to consider what could be done by the school to show its gratitude to the infirmarian. Finally he made a considerable speech on the subject, one evening when there was quite a gathering in the billiard room.

"That's the eye, Sharp!" some one declared.

"You've got a head on ya!" a dozen more repeated.

It was decided then and there that since Brother Giles was a benefactor of the institution, besides being the best scout going, a suitable gift would

have to express everybody's thanks. But what? Should it be a picture? Or a book? Or cigars?

"*Gosh,* I don't know!" the freckled promoter admitted while he scratched his head.

The problem rested there until finally a committee visited the Brother to investigate his demands and desires. Brother Giles laughed and shook his head at their guarded questions. "Why, a Franciscan needs nothing," he declared proudly. "And yet there is one thing I should really like to have—a thing that, of course, can never be!"

He sighed, and the lads did their best to coax the secret out of him. But, like the oracle of Delphi about whom they were studying, he refused to say more. They worked him into the best frame of mind imaginable; they could not remember ever having laughed so violently at his stories; nevertheless, Brother Giles was as the tomb when it came to revealing the supreme desire of his heart.

"No, boys," he said when they were leaving, "it wouldn't be a good thing to mention what that is. Better for me to keep my old mouth shut and not be telling what I ought not to."

During the next two weeks, the school was scarcely anything more than a debating society for the discussion of that upon which the infirmarian's happiness depended. It was supposed to

be a house-cat, because the Brother had once been overheard denouncing a mouse; a trip to Alsace, from which country he had come; and even a fishing-rod, because he had several times referred to the gentle art of angling. But it was Mr. Sharp himself who finally settled the difficulty. He had gone to the infirmary and started a subtle conversation.

"Brother, do you really like to smoke those —those things?" he asked, pointing to the strong stogie which Brother Giles had ignited while sitting in his own little office, surrounded with medicine boxes and hot-water bottles.

"No," was the answer. "I'll be honest and tell you it's a lot more fun smoking a pipe. But they haven't the right kind in this country. There now—there is a pipe!"

The Brother drew Mr. Sharp's attention to a colored photograph of a most jovial somebody-or-other, drawing gigantic whiffs through a stem almost a yard long. Of course Brother Giles was merely embroidering: he had no idea that Mr. Sharp was there on business, and fundamentally he was not very sure that he would really enjoy so extensive a pipe. It was just simply pleasant to imagine that smoking a pipe such as no one in the neighborhood possessed, or would be likely to possess, might be the royal way of in-

haling tobacco. But Mr. Sharp came away convinced.

Such a time as they had! It was Peter Schneeweiss, whose father owned a cigar-store in a village not very far away, who obtained the address of a German merchant able to supply such an article as was wanted. It was the same Peter Schneeweiss who wrote the letter in most elegant German, and inscribed the envelope. But it was Mr. Sharp who personally saw the epistle into the post office and wished it a safe journey.

That pipe became the outstanding topic of conversation among the youth of St. Bonaventure's.

"How long do you 'spose it'll be?"

"What if Brother Giles hasn't got wind enough to make it draw?"

"Gosh, I'll bet it'll be cool."

Such were the questions and remarks which swarmed round the fringes of the ball diamond when spring had come and the leaves were peeping out.

Finally the strange-looking parcel, on which there was duty to pay, arrived. It was opened with awe and solemnity.

"Gee!"

That was a summary of delight and astonishment. "Gee!" What could be more final in the way of utterance? The pipe was indeed quite the

longest and most colorful instrument of its kind ever seen at St. Bonaventure's. The bowl was of dark wood, with brass trimmings and a gilt monogram; the stem supported a multitude of minute carvings over the vast area of its blonde surface. The presentation was made during the afternoon, with off-hand gravity.

"Here's something the fellows thought you'd like to have, Brother," Mr. Sharp said casually. "It ain't much, but it'll go to show we're mighty glad to know you and all——"

Mr. Sharp came to an abrupt halt. There wasn't any more, though he had come prepared to say at least two minutes' worth. Brother Giles, however, didn't seem to mind the abrupt conclusion. He placed his hands together with a kind of ecstasy and thanked them with gusto.

"There isn't a finer pipe in all Alsace," he declared. "Not even the President of the United States has such a pipe. Why, I'm actually wondering if the Father Superior will allow me to keep it!"

This caused a momentary consternation, but the brother hastened to assure his benefactors that the Father Superior was not too strict in such matters. After all it was a gift from the boys, and generosity was to be encouraged. Then he praised them all, and for their delight filled the

magnificent bowl with tobacco and began to smoke. "Fine, Fine!" he kept on repeating, and then launched into six narratives which not even the oldest present could recall having listened to before. When the study bell rang, the boys came away feeling that giving was indeed better than receiving, especially when it resulted in making your sides ache with laughter. The Prefect was obliged to frown in many directions that evening. He could not remember ever having seen the students of the upper Study Hall so restless. "It is the weather," he told himself with a shake of the head, being a man who had not been permitted to share the secret.

Brother Giles, however, sat in his little office looking at the pipe rather ruefully. Once in a while he shook his head.

"Now there!" he told himself severely. "That is why they were asking what I wanted to have. And so. . . ."

And so he would have to keep on smoking the pipe, for the satisfaction of its ruthless donors. It didn't matter that the bowl was strong and tasted like burned cabbage; it made no difference that only a team of horses could have drawn a whiff through that stem with any ease:—smoke the pipe he would have to!

"Ah, how were they to guess what it is I really

want?" he grumbled. "And of course if they knew, they would laugh."

Brother Giles looked out the window, over the emerald tree tops that crowded the sloping hill beneath the building. Spring had come, with warm air and rising life, bird-song and the mists of April nights. He loved all these things, first because the Lord had made them, and secondly because they were good. Youth was beautiful, and so was the young year. Beautiful! He remembered the flowered fields of his own home, fields which stretched to the mighty base of stony mountains over which there was always a blue haze.

"In a few more years," he told himself with a sigh, "I will be gone. And then, what will there be to bring me back for a little while to people's minds? Where will be my monument?"

A monument . . . that was what Brother Giles desired. There would be the graveyard cross, of course, but he wanted something that would remind the youth who came here in future years that there had been a Brother Giles who loved boys and told them stories and put his hand on their foreheads when fever had come. It was a wish into which his whole heart went. But he couldn't tell it to any one, and so, what was the use thinking about it?

Just then there came a rap at the door, and a very ancient brother entered.

"Here you are," he said merrily after the customary greetings had passed between them. "That's another pair of shoes. And I hope," he added maliciously, "they're big enough, Brother Giles."

It was in truth an enormous pair of shoes. Brother Giles' feet, when you came to notice them, were enormous. In all truth those feet, like the pipe, were scarcely to be matched on the continent. But so long as they did their duty, the Brother regarded them with affection and spoke no word against them.

He put on the shoes and decided to go to the monastery. First, however, he thought it would be a useful idea to descend to the billiard room and see if there might be an idle newspaper or so on the chairs. Usually there was. And usually such a newspaper contained morsels of information and—interest.

It was dark at the stairway, and Brother Giles went down slowly, feeling his way with the help of the bannister. When he had come to the bottom, he put out his foot with a sense of trust. But to his great astonishment, the foot went down into a mass of cold softness.

"Oh! What on earth?" he asked himself.

Then the reply shot into his mind. A new layer of cement had been put into this corridor, and nobody had thought to bar the stairway. He had stepped into the cement. But what could be done about it now?

"No newspaper to-night," he decided then, withdrew his shoe with some difficulty, and retreated to the monastery.

Very likely, he consoled himself, no one would ever know what had disturbed the smooth surface of the basement. It might have been a cat—or an evil spirit. He would hold his peace.

But Brother Giles had not reckoned with the unparalleled size of his shoe. He had forgotten that neither man nor domestic beast could follow in his footsteps. When the next day came, certain wide-awake boys went below to see if the pavement had dried. And there was the tell-tale impression.

"Who did that?"

"Why, that's Brother Giles' foot. Sure enough it is!"

Sure enough. It couldn't be anything else. In a few hours the report was abroad that Brother Giles had stepped into the cement. At first he put off all insinuations with an air of indignation. What would he be going down there for at night? Then finally he surrendered to circumstances with

some grace, and confessed that once in a while he took to walking in his sleep.

But, as a matter of fact, it was thus that Brother Giles' wish for a monument was unexpectedly fulfilled. He had left his mark upon time. Something existed to remember him by. Even to-day, when Brother Giles is no more on this earth and the little cross speaks of him so austerely in the graveyard, you will be sure to ask, when you see the gigantic impression in the basement of St. Bonaventure's college, "What is that?" And the answer will be given: "Why, that is Brother Giles' foot."

VII. The Little Boy of Our Lady's

T St. Bonaventure's as almost everywhere else in this wide world, the human heart is quite like the weather. It sometimes rushes violently in this direction or that, without knowing exactly why. You may hurry past a dozen tottering beggars and scarcely give them a thought; then suddenly a pair of aching eyes will look out from somewhere, and your heart will remember them for haunted days. Such is the pedagogy of charity, most profitable and venturesome of all the quests of the soul. Perhaps it is news to you and me, but St. Bonaventure's has realized it long ago. The monastery doors are always like open arms. Sometimes needy persons come into its peace as casually and undisturbingly as the air; then again, one happens in quite like a swallow—and those who see can never again forget.

"Well, that is out of the way," Brother Reginald declared, wiping the flour from his great fingers. "Now you may take the cutter—there

it is, on the bench—and cut each and every one of the tarts."

"Should I press it down hard, Brother?"

"Oh, so-so, Michael. The cutter is sharp and you—you are a strong boy."

Which was really flattery. As he looked at the little fellow beside him, the brother's eyes clouded with a deep pity and affection. He was none of your fine, sensitive persons. He worked hard and could toss a sack of flour about the room as if it were a toy balloon. But it was very pleasant to see the gentleness on his face as he leaned over the great mound of dough in the monastery bakery.

"Gee, but this knife is sharp, Brother," the boy agreed happily.

"And why should it be dull, I'd like to know?"

Brother Reginald shook his head. It was hard to imagine how such peculiar things got into the skulls of boys—anyhow, into the skull of one like Michael. He studied the little fellow, who was frail and terribly in earnest about his task. And always the eye and the heart of the Brother went out to the lad's infirmity—a lame leg. It was so pitiful, so weak, so human.

This is how the two had met:

Brother Reginald had just finished cleaning up his bakery one July evening, and was on the way

back to the monastery. Birds twittered lazily in the trees, because the weather was quite hot and no rain seemed anywhere about.

"Hello!" a voice said suddenly. "Hello, there!"

The Brother turned to confront a very small boy, half-buried in the dust of the road. "Hello," he answered. "Well, what is it *you* want?"

"I don't know what all I want," the little boy declared. "But maybe you'll be nice to me, and give me something to eat. What say?"

"You'd better go home, son. Mother will give you plenty when supper time comes around."

The Brother remembered very well that in days gone by, *his* mother would have frowned severely on the business of eating between meals. But the little boy was not at all impressed by the speech. In fact, he shook his head.

"My mother? I ain't got any of them, you know. I've just come away from the Man. He said I was to go and that he couldn't feed me no more."

"The Man?"

"Yes. But I 'spose you don't know about him. He's the big man that sells medicine in a wagon. From place to place. I've been all over—everywhere. He sells the medicine and I dance for the people to watch. Like this!"

The boy began an odd little jig in the road. And then it was that Brother Reginald observed the infirmity. One of the child's legs was shriveled and shorter than the other. At sight of that, something queer happened to the Brother's heart. It began to scamper and ache. Never in all his life, it seemed, had he seen anything so sad and pitiful. Tears crowded into his eyes even though tears were strangers there.

"What is your name, child?" he asked, stooping.

"Mike."

"Michael!" the Brother exclaimed. "Why, that was . . . But never you mind. You come along with me, Michael, and we'll see what can be done. Why, of course!"

Hand in hand they went directly to see the Father Superior, who being a man of many cares was at first inclined to look upon Michael as something like the well-known disastrous straw that was once placed on a camel's back. But after a while he arranged matters, stipulating that the boy was to study a few hours each day and spend the rest of his time helping in the bakery. That is why they were together now, making the great brown tarts.

"It's a lot of fun to be a baker, isn't it, Brother?" Michael asked. "'Specially when

there's things to do like making these. Wish I'd always be a baker!"

"Just you wait until May Day comes around, Michael. *Then* we really have something to do. Yes, I should say we did."

"Wished it was May Day already," Michael declared.

And well he might. For it was the custom at St. Bonaventure's—at least it was during Brother Reginald's time—to bake a tremendous cake for May Day, with an immaculate frosting above which stood a sugar image of the Blessed Lady crowned with a circlet of bright gold stars. All through the winter which had passed since their meeting, the baker and his tiny apprentice had discussed this cake. The talk made many a slow hour go quickly.

But now the days rushed on and on. April arrived with gray skies and chilly rains. Michael didn't take to it very well. He began to look so very thin and pale that Brother Reginald's heart bled. It was so pleasant, somehow, to have the little fellow scampering about. Indeed, what would the bakery have amounted to without him? Brother Reginald decided that the Lord in Heaven must have a similar feeling when a mere man wanders into the angelic gardens.

"Is there something the matter with you, Mi-

chael?" the Brother inquired anxiously, one morning.

The boy leaned against a table and tried to smile. "I don't guess it's much, Brother," he confessed. "But most of the time I feel just like a little sparrow that can't hardly fly."

"Let me see your tongue!" commanded the baker. And then—though really he knew very little about the matter of tongues—he added, "Ah, ha! We must take you for a visit to Brother Giles."

Nevertheless, it was not until a day or two after this conversation that the visit actually occurred. Then the infirmarian looked most grave. He couldn't tell exactly what the trouble was. It might be this, and again it might be that. But certainly Michael would have to go to bed. The sooner the better, too.

"Nonsense," muttered Brother Reginald. "I think you are always finding diseases where there's really no such thing. Why, I'd like to know, should a boy be taking to bed when all the rest of the world is dancing in the sun?"

For it was a marvelously beautiful day.

"I suppose it's natural that you should feel that way," Brother Giles observed with a sigh. "But all the same you know very well it's for his own good I'm ordering him to bed. I will do every-

thing I can, Brother,—absolutely everything I can!"

Accordingly the baker went away reassured, while the infirmarian shook his head as he tucked the poor little lame boy under the sheets. The boy himself took everything good-naturedly, excepting the bitter medicine from the brown bottle of which he got a spoonful ever so often. He declared it was worse than what the Man had peddled to folks. In vain did Brother Giles praise the medicine highly and tell a story to boot.

Every day after work, Brother Reginald visited his friend. They talked about almost everything in the world, and invented tales the like of which were never heard anywhere. But afterward the brother came away with a sigh. Things weren't what they ought to be. The little boy looked so weak and pale that you would have believed him made of dough—not baked at all.

"Too bad, too bad!" Brother Reginald muttered.

But what was he to do? Nothing came to fill up the great emptiness in his heart. The winds of April played in the branches of the trees, and whistled round the gables of the monastery. Easter passed, with its festival and glory. Then one evening a useful idea came into Brother Reginald's mind. He stopped, reflected, and then

decided to act. Hastily he followed the path round the cloister garden until he came to a giant oak tree, under the branches of which was an image—a weather-beaten little wooden image—of Our Lady.

He knelt down.

"Holy Mother Mary," he said, in a tone of simple confidence, "you know quite well that Michael is a very good friend of mine. I would miss him a great deal—much more than I can tell you. It would really be easier to get along without sunshine, Holy Mother. Now then, here is what I'm going to do. He shall be your little boy, too—the little boy of Our Lady. Then you will do something for him, I am sure. Amen!"

Brother Reginald arose and went off to bed, much comforted. On the next day Michael was ever so much brighter, too. He repeated some things he had read out of a book, wonderful things about a man named Napoleon. It would be a lot of fun to be Napoleon, he decided enthusiastically.

"I thought you wanted to be a baker?" Brother Reginald countered. "It's queer how fast people change their minds nowadays!"

"No, Brother," the boy said suddenly. "I don't guess I ever will be a baker. A fellow can't stay in bed and be one of them, you know."

"Oh, now, now! It's high time you were getting out of bed, Michael."

But the little boy smiled and shook his head. He was a wise chap for his age.

Brother Reginald rose from his chair and bent close over the bed. "Michael, do you know what I've done?" he whispered mistily. "Of course you don't! How could you? But I've given you to Our Lady. You are her boy now, just as you're mine. And so we shall see, Michael. We shall see!"

He stroked the child's hair quickly with his rough old fingers. But Michael merely smiled. Perhaps Our Lady had already told him a few things, and caressed him in his sleep. "I'm much obliged to you, Brother!" he said then, affectionately.

But when he went to sleep that night, the poor baker's heart was somehow very sad.

Then, almost before anybody had time to think about it, May Day happened along and the great cake was to be made. Brother Reginald mixed the batter and got the ovens at precisely the right temperature. But all the while he kept thinking of Michael. It was too bad—too very bad. Yet, what could any one do? Finally he decided upon a scheme all his own. He would bake another cake, larger and more handsome than any St.

Bonaventure's had ever seen, and offer it to Our Lady at her shrine. And so he toiled at the masterpiece almost feverishly; and while it was steaming, he could hardly wait to get a peep at it. When at last he could safely test it with a straw, he nearly shouted for joy. It was perfect! It was even still more perfect when he had finished the frosting and a great number of sacred figures that adorned the top.

Hastily he carried it to the weatherbeaten little wooden image, and placed it reverently in the niche. "Now then, Holy Mother, this is for you," he said explicitly. "And I wish very much that Michael may be mine, for a while. Later on, of course——"

But Brother Reginald never finished what he wished to say.

"So here you are, Brother," a voice exclaimed behind him. "I've been looking for you all over everywhere."

It was the infirmarian. Just as soon as their eyes met, the news was common property, too. A great sadness came over both.

"He is dead," Brother Reginald murmured. "Is it not so?"

"All of a sudden he was gone," Brother Giles admitted.

Without another word, the two walked mourn-

fully to the sick room and looked down at the frail little face on the bed. So white he was, so peaceful, you could not doubt for a moment that he was the little boy of Our Lady.

"It is better so, my Brother!" the infirmarian pleaded gently. "For in Heaven there are neither lame legs nor loneliness. We shall all see."

"But—but here there is no Michael!"

Brother Reginald was sobbing. How was he to explain everything that had been written into his heart—the burning joy of tenderness, the miracle of charity, that had been possible to him? And now this aching loneliness! It was hard to keep from accusing Our Lady of being selfish. Even with a great cake she could not be satisfied.

Nevertheless he knelt to pray long and earnestly for the lad who was now a light in the City where the first Michael keeps watch with shining wings. Even if the world did seem empty to himself, Brother Reginald understood that for his friend it was all glory and peace. And that, of course, was good.

He walked back to the bakery in the gathering darkness. Clouds had been drawn over most of the sky, and there was a sharp howl in the wind that raced round the spire. Suddenly Brother Reginald came face to face with a woman leading a little girl. The two stood still in the path as

if they had lost their way. What could they be doing, he wondered.

"Good evening," the woman said shyly.

"Good evening, good evening," he replied, somewhat astonished.

"I would like to ask you a question, Brother, if you don't mind? Can you get me something to eat? My little . . . For the love of God, Brother?"

And now Brother Reginald, looking at the pair, noticed a strange and moving circumstance. The little girl was lame; one leg was shorter than the other!

His heart beat so violently that he could hardly speak, even if the answer to their plea was ready to be given. "Of course there is something for you," he declared gently. "Something very fine! I'm sure the little girl will like it, too."

They followed him as best they could down the path round the cloister garden to the weather-beaten image of Mary. In the darkness it seemed more comforting than ever before; and there was the cake—the marvelous cake—which he had offered in exchange for Michael. For the little boy of Our Lady's.

"Here, take this," he said quickly. "It's the Mother Mary's, but she won't care. She has. . . ."

But naturally the woman did not understand

to what he was referring. She began to thank him so earnestly that Brother Reginald grew fidgety.

"Yes, yes, that is nothing at all!" he grumbled, and placed his hand gently on the child's head. She was so frail, so little, so hungry. And she was lame.

"Good night," he said hastily. "I hope you have a good time. And perhaps you will come another time, eh?"

Then, without waiting for a reply, he raced off to the monastery. The world was made for charity, he saw. And in his heart, like a sudden, fierce warmth, there was some of the laughter of the little boy who was Our Lady's.

VIII. Beggar's Privilege

IF there is a month in the twelve which St. Bonaventure's may be said to look upon with especial favor it is October, when the trees hang a cloth of shadowy gold around the hill, and a surprising number of squirrels frisk about, after the first slight frost, to take advantage of the fruitfulness of earth. Indeed these squirrels are only scampering symbols of what is taking place all about them:—the last duskily yellow stacks of grain disappear into the busy threshing machine; the rustling corn stands in shocks about the fields; and boys and girls sing in the orchards as they gather winesaps and russets into buxom wicker baskets. "Get up!" says the farmer to his horse with more eagerness than ever, because the days are shorter and there is so much hauling and husking and digging ahead of them. "Hurry up, dears!" says the farmer's wife to her daughters, because there is fruit to be canned and ever so much besides to do in the house.

Well, upon a certain October day of this par-

ticular year, Brother Cosmos received a letter from the Father Superior which had something like this to say: "Brother, the time has come to go begging; and once more I have chosen you to take charge of the work. You might begin day after to-morrow, if there is no rain."

"So, so," Brother Cosmos reflected, and hurried to make a report to Father Engelbert, the priest whose companion he had been during nearly a year.

"I hope your cold is better and that you have warm socks to wear with your sandals," said the priest when he had received the information. "It is hard to let you go, but . . ."

Here Father Engelbert shrugged his shoulders and threw his hands into opposite directions. They were really very good friends. Of course it would have been difficult not to be fond of Brother Cosmos. He met life with genuine holy joy (though he himself didn't realize it), and even his long beard (upon which he secretly prided himself) was somehow benignant. Father Engelbert, as pastor of the little village parish at some distance from the monastery, was naturally a man of numerous cares. He suffered the brother to teach catechism to the younger children, but there were times when he came within an inch of losing his patience. Both men, you see, were

Germans; and though this fact would be of trifling value to their biographers, it really explains how they could live together most amicably in spite of differences.

For instance, the coming of Ash Wednesday had found Father Engelbert suffering from a violent fever which forced him to remain in the house. Nevertheless he blessed the ashes and, having called the brother, instructed him to carry out the ceremony. "You must make the sign of the cross on the foreheads of the people," he explained, "and say each time the words prescribed by Holy Mother Church—*Memento homo quia pulvis es et in pulverem reverteris.*"

Brother Cosmos experienced some difficulty with the Latin; and, after committing the sacred maxim to memory, repeated it over and over on the way to the church. But just as he was ringing the bell, an old lady greeted him so cordially that he asked about her health, and whist! the Latin was completely forgotten.

He ran to Father Engelbert, who smiled and repeated the phrase most carefully.

"Thank, you, Father. This time I will not forget," the brother promised and hurried back. But two little boys came up and danced around him and were so glad to see him that all of a sudden the Latin had gone completely.

In despair he rushed to the house once more and asked, "Father Engelbert, what is it again that I should say?"

The priest, whose head was throbbing, lost all his patience. "You are a fool and will always be one," he said savagely in German.

Brother Cosmos, without stopping in his dismay to reflect upon the meaning of the words or to question the authority of his superior, hurried back, met with no interruption, and placed ashes on the foreheads of all, with the German declaration—"you are a fool and will always be one"—which amazed those who understood it exceedingly. The brother himself realized what he had done only very late in the day, by which time Father Engelbert was so much improved that he laughed and declared the German most appropriate.

Despite this and similar incidents, the two men parted with genuine reluctance. As for the children of the village, their love for Brother Cosmos was so great that his departure threatened to resemble that of the Piper of Hamelin Town. But when he reached the monastery and knelt at the Superior's feet for a blessing, the seriousness of begging came home to him again.

"The year has been unevenly blessed," said the Father Superior. "Some of the farmers have

made very little; and those who are richest are precisely the ones who give the least. And yet the cloister has never been more deeply in need. There are ten new poor boys in the college, and our own garden has suffered from the drought. You must do what you can under the circumstances."

Brother Cosmos nodded. The idea of begging was by no means novel to him. At the close of each October, the monks of Saint Bonaventure's go abroad in the land for the collection of alms. A monastery wagon is ready at dawn, and two brothers direct their horses to neighboring farms and load up whatever is given them. To some extent, of course, such alms are considered a tribute to the monastery for spiritual services rendered, just as gathering them is the fulfillment of a hallowed rule of the order. But there is an even better reason for the custom. We know that it is strangely, sadly true that the heart of man is least likely to reflect on God and His munificence precisely when there is a plenty of everything; and His servants, asking charity in the name of their Master, remind all that the wealth of the harvest fruit, wrapped as it were so prodigally in gold, is not the work of man alone. Some of the farmers round about Saint Bonaventure's are astonishingly stingy, however,

and do not hesitate to grumble vehemently while giving as little as they can.

Anyhow, on the morning appointed, the weather was fair and Brother Cosmos set out to scour the countryside. It was true, indeed, that the year had not been exceptionally good. A great deal of corn had been nipped by the frost and the potatoes had suffered from a blight. Only the best land had produced a bumper crop, and this was owned by miserly men of whom Thomas Dielmann was a striking example.

Brother Cosmos, however, bravely visited the poorer farms first. At each house he drew up his wagon, greeted everybody in the name of his Master, and inquired after the health of the family.

Almost immediately the conversation would drift close to the matter in hand. "It has been a very poor year, Brother," the man would say. "With a dry summer and the early frost, the farmer can put little into his wallet this fall. People always talk about how well off we are out here in the country, but you don't see any of them coming to try it, do you, Brother?"

"No. That's right," Brother Cosmos would answer. "It's a way they have of talking about farmers and the monastery. 'Franciscans have nothing to worry about,' they say; but none of

them seem in a hurry to get rid of their worries. Oh, if they only understood why we ask—how much there is to be done!"

By this time he had got down from the wagon and had lifted a little girl or boy into his arms, singing meanwhile some snatch of a ditty that won their hearts because it was so simple—so like themselves. Soon all the children in the house had gathered round the brown habit, and the smallest one was playing with the white cord and wondering excitedly what the knots were for.

Then the farmer looked at his wife. Then she returned a glance which said, "Well, there is always something left. Give him a sack of potatoes, won't you?"

And *then,* of course, Brother Cosmos drove off, leaving his blessing, taking with him the glad farewells and gesticulations of the children, who were happy all day long because of his visit. Nevertheless, though his journey was a kind of triumphal procession in so far as urchins and their sisters were concerned, Brother Cosmos was obliged to confess, when the heavily loaded wagon rolled towards the monastery that evening, to a hard day's work with comparatively slight returns. In good years there had been two loads a day.

"But anyhow it is something, considering this

has been a hard year," he declared to the young and very bashful brother who had accompanied him. "We have much to be thankful for!"

"Yes, indeed," admitted the other with a start.

Round about them the beautiful evening faded like a mystical robe of many colors, and one by one the stars came out timidly—stars like rosary beads slipping from the fingers of a modest girl praying where there are no people to see.

On the next morning the two Brothers set out again. It was a brisk, cloudy day; and the horses seemed to understand that the journey would be long, because they trotted over the road most eagerly. "Wait until tonight!" Brother Cosmos muttered as if addressing them. "Then there will be something to pull, you gay young upstarts, —perhaps a good deal!"

As the wagon bumped over the rough road, both brothers thought of Thomas Dielmann more than of all the other farmers together. Dielmann was wealthy, but his riches had never profited the monastery. And yet he had a pious wife, who was kind-hearted if ever woman was. Half unconsciously they looked forward to visiting his farm as to the great event in their day—looked forward, too, with some fear because Dielmann's tongue was sharp.

Brother Cosmos decided to visit the poorer farms first. In fact, one of them proved to be so poor that the Brother, in order not to offend the man, exchanged a sack of potatoes for a sack of apples, which he refused to accept outright. The man was Dielmann's neighbor and did not fail to remark that he wished he were as rich as some people close by.

Mr. Dielmann, however, had caught sight of the monastery wagon below. What was he to do? He had arranged to look at some cattle offered for sale at a distant farm and could not remain to send the brother off with the accustomed nothing. His wife, who was respectful of the monastery and who talked continuously these days of how much there was to be thankful for, could not be trusted to guard the family treasure resolutely. The lazy frairs could be very diligent in talking women out of their property, he told himself with a shrewd smile. Still, he was rather afraid of his spouse and disliked exceedingly meeting her reproachful eyes, particularly when anybody else happened to be present. Though she always did his bidding, there were uncomfortable moments.

An idea suddenly entered Mr. Dielmann's head.

It seemed a brilliant idea. He could dispose

of the brother and avoid a scene with his wife by putting up a sign which she, who could not read German, would be unable to fathom. Accordingly, he wrote out hastily on a sheet of yellow wrapping paper the following remarks: "There is nothing on this farm for lazy monks. Remember that." Then he signed his name, nailed the sheet on the inside of the barn door, and called to his wife.

"Mary," he said; "please don't leave the house this afternoon because I may have to telephone about something. And if a Brother should come to beg, tell him he may have whatever he reads on the inside of the barn-door—but nothing else."

Then, very much pleased with his stratagem, he rode off. A few moments later, Brother Cosmos turned his horses into the stately lane which led to Dielmann's buildings. On both sides lay wide fields and meadows; and to the right, at some small distance, the view was shut off by a long stretch of woodland. The charm of the scene was not lost on the Brother. But he said three *Aves* to strengthen his courage; for though he did not mind insult, the hard sarcasm of this man filled him with dismay.

He drew up his horses in front of the house. The rich farmer's very gracious wife answered

his salutation most gently from the door, and then said, "I can't leave the house, Brother, and I don't know what my husband intends to give. But he left a message for you in writing, nailed on the inside of the barn-door. He said you might have what you read there, and nothing else."

"Well, well," said the Brother with a feeling of great joy.

When he had hurried to the barn-door and read the laconic sign, he was for the moment utterly nonplussed. It was worse than anything he had expected, this contemptuous dismissal. But the words, *"you may have what you read there, and nothing else,"* flashed into his mind and remained. Why, he could read what he felt like reading. He could read. . . .

No man ever crossed the distance to Mr. Dielmann's house with such haste as that of Brother Cosmos. His excited knock at the door brought the mistress at once. "I wanted to ask if it is really true that I may have whatever I read there?" he inquired eagerly.

"Yes," Mrs. Dielmann replied earnestly. "My husband said just that. Of course you will understand that I can't do anything else?"

"But this is what I read: 'Ten sacks of potatoes, ten sacks of apples, ten bushels of corn

and—and five bushels of onions,'" the Brother declared. "May I really have them all?"

"Why, yes," answered Mrs. Dielmann with a flush of cheerful pleasure.

"What wonderful generosity!" cried Brother Cosmos, clapping his hands boyishly. "It is all very wonderful—miraculous."

And after the load had been prepared, the Brothers were invited to come in for lunch to warm them against the journey home. Brother Cosmos assented, though his heart was warm enough to withstand ten journeys. He laughed with the three little Dielmanns until they were hoarse. Then the wagon rumbled slowly on towards Saint Bonaventure's, even if it was still early in the afternoon.

"I wonder what Dielmann will think of our knowledge of reading?" Brother Cosmos asked with a chuckle.

For some reason, the chuckle soon expanded into a roar, at the sound of which even the horses were delighted. In his soul the Brother realized that once more the foolish had confounded the wise.

IX. Made to Suit

LL these years Saint Bonaventure's has been drawing people towards it in something like the fashion in which small flecks of steel are attracted to a magnet. When the bells ring for an evening benediction, you would fancy, if you happened to be standing beside the steep road which leads upward in the direction of the spire, that souls are hastening in crowds after refreshment. Nor would you be altogether wrong. Saint Bonaventure's has enormous books which chronicle births, deaths and matters of lesser importance. And while we are at it, we may as well mention that there is one enormous volume which keeps track of those who have married. Such people surely have their place in this world, and often as not are very interesting. You look through these carefully kept pages marveling that so much of moonlight and promised affection could have got itself written into one tome. And then, of course, both you and Saint Bonaventure wish them all Godspeed.

Father Reginald had been officially entrusted with taking up the annual census. Being a sturdy man, he walked with no signs of fatigue from one end of the district to the other saying, "Well, now, how do you do? Has anybody new appeared in this house?" Or, "Ah, if I'm right, Mrs. So-and-So, you weren't rocking *that* cradle a year ago!"

It actually gave him the greatest pleasure to make a new entry; and when a name had been stricken off the list, he sighed with deep regret, "With the angels, with the angels!"

But there was one house which never registered any change in population. For all that it was a trim enough little place, with a lawn, a garden, and even a cherry tree. Nothing more blissfully romantic could have been found anywhere in the neighborhood. And then, too, since the owner had devoted all his time to the care of bees and the extracting of honey, it really seemed. . . .

"Thomas! Oh, Thomas!" Father Reginald would call as he passed by, merely for the sake of Christian charity.

"Oh, how are you, Father? Yes, Father, come right in," a voice answered.

"All right, I shall," the priest replied as soon as his host appeared from somewhere. "But it is purely a pleasure trip—no business here!"

They shook hands, and it became apparent at once that Thomas Waddell had not been cast for a romantic rôle. The man was so astonishingly enormous that when you had sat in a room with him for a while, you actually got the impression that you were in the presence of a crowd. But then, after all, Father Reginald reflected, he wasn't the least bit repulsive. He was merely big. The eyes were benevolent. And what a fine complexion! Sometimes, of course, Thomas was darkened by a shadow on account of having been alone so much, but his good nature peeped through constantly, quite like a mountain rising above a fog.

"How are the bees, Thomas?" the priest asked. "I suppose you can hardly find room to store all of your honey."

"This hasn't been such a good year, Father. The rainy weather spoiled the clover a little. But then, there is always enough for me to get along on!"

Thomas sighed, and it seemed as if the rainy weather had returned.

"Young man, do you know what is the matter?" Father Reginald demanded suddenly. "There is far too much room in this house. And what's more, I'm sick and tired of coming round here to find never a change in the census. Why,

suppose everybody were like you—what then? Something must be done about it, Thomas!"

"But—"

"I'm afraid you are a proud and vainglorious fellow," continued the priest. "You run off and sulk if a girl smiles at you for being a person of some size. Why don't you laugh back? Why don't you show them you know all this a lot better than they do?"

"But—"

"Thomas, I am sick and tired of that word 'but.' I have listened to it all my life, and I've never yet seen it do anything sensible. One of these days you shall see!"

Father Reginald shook his finger vigorously. As for Thomas, he shrugged his shoulders. It was very true that he was fed up with being a bachelor—with sitting here alone in this little house round which the bees buzzed, of cooking his meals and forgetting about the salt, of trying to sew buttons on his shirts. But similarly he felt very sure that the maidens of the neighborhood, when they reflected upon matrimony, never came within a mile of putting him into their picture. He therefore smiled sadly at the priest, and afterward walked out to inspect a certain hive, with the mournful certainty that he would always be a constant quantity on the census sheets.

The census-taker, however, lost no time getting to work. "I've just come from Tom Waddell's," he would say whenever an unattached young lady happened to be in the audience. "Fine young man, fine prosperous business! And you can't imagine how comfortable that little house is, with the bees humming around it.

But almost as sure as daylight the young lady's head would go up into the air at the angle which indicates "wind in the opposite direction."

"H'm!" Father Reginald informed himself when his advertising had been thus repulsed five times in a row. Was he to admit failure? Could nothing be done for a young man who—as the priest had now persuaded himself—was the best catch for miles round?

Then, and only then, did destiny come to his aid. Happening one day to enter Mr. Baldus' grocery store, Father Reginald was informed that a new girl had been employed to wait on customers. He joyfully noted the accession to the census figures, but when the young lady herself came forward, an even greater joy suddenly enlivened his heart.

"Miss Regina Summer," he wrote quickly. "Is that right? Well, well! I'm very happy to know you, I'm sure!"

"So'm I to know you, Father," Miss Summer

responded with a blush, while she stood first on one foot and then on another.

There was no doubt of her being a desirable young woman. All the sacraments had been received in order. Her parents were poor and lived in the country at some distance, she had soft brown eyes, and her figured percale dress was very neat.

Yes, he decided, she was completely satisfactory, although she was quite the thinnest person he had met for some time. Slenderness itself, with not an ounce of flesh to spare! "Made to suit!" Father Reginald chuckled to himself, and then told the young lady he hoped she would feel at home in the village. Meanwhile he had permitted his eye to roam about the establishment, as if he were deciding on a purchase from Mr. Baldus' varied stores. Outside he grinned broadly; and when he had come to the end of the street he was still grinning.

Two days later, at three o'clock in the afternoon, Mr. Waddell heard the priest's voice calling from the sidewalk. It seemed there was a note of distress in the summons. Hastily he dropped the needle with which he had been trying to patch a shirt.

"What is it, Father?" he asked anxiously from the doorway.

Father Reginald was pressing a hand against his heart. "Do you happen to have any caraway seed about, Thomas?" he asked slowly. "My old trouble seems to have come back on me this afternoon, and I feel there is nothing that will help me excepting that. Caraway is always good, you know."

"There isn't any in the house, Father, that I know of," the beekeeper replied solicitously. "But if you will come in and take a chair, I'll run to the store and get some."

"It would be a great favor on your part, Thomas."

Accordingly, Father Reginald made himself at home on the parlor settee, while the obliging Thomas hastened to the store. We must admit, however, that external signs of the priest's malady began to disappear almost immediately. In fact he began to read his office with the air of having found some fairly amusing passage in it.

Mr. Waddell reached the store quickly. "Do you happen to have any caraway seed, Miss?" he demanded of the young lady who stood behind the counter.

"Caraway seed?" she asked doubtfully. "Let me see. . . ."

But the more she saw, the less she saw. "It's too bad Mr. Baldus happens to be taking a nap

just now," she said. "Perhaps, though, if you'll help me, we may be able to find them somewhere."

"Of course I'll be glad to help."

They looked high and then low. First the young lady supposed they might be under a large box of figs. But when Thomas had obligingly lifted the box, there was little to be seen excepting poultry powder. Then she imagined they could, by some chance, have been put in the candy case. And once again Thomas rummaged cordially but in vain. He began to perspire.

"There they are, there they are!" the young lady cried suddenly, clapping her hands.

"Where?" Thomas demanded doubtfully.

"'Way, away up," she answered. "See? On the very last shelf there's a tin box with 'Caraway' printed on it. See those red letters?"

Thomas didn't quite see, but he grunted his approval. He had really begun to wonder how a lady so young could possibly pick out a box at such a distance. She must have remarkably good eyes. And then, for some reason or other, Thomas noticed that they were soft, brown eyes.

"How do you s'pose I'm ever going to climb up there?" she asked, puzzled.

"Oh, I'm sure Mr. Baldus has a ladder. Yes—there it is!"

"But I'm afraid to climb ladders."

Thomas looked at the ladder, then at the young lady, and finally toward the caraway seed. It was a perplexing situation.

"I don't hardly think I could risk climbing up that ladder myself," he said reflectively. "And there's a Franciscan at my house who needs those seeds for his health. It's some old trouble he has."

"Oh!" the young lady replied. At first she had observed that the ladder was much too small and frail for a person of her customer's size, and had been tempted to giggle. But the matter of a health at stake made her quite serious.

They looked at each other in perplexity.

"I—I'll tell you what we'll do," Thomas blurted out then. "I'll hold the ladder very tight and then you see you—"

"But then!" Miss Summer said modestly and blushed.

Thomas' melancholy features were wreathed in an unusual smile as he bent the brim of his hat far down over his eyes.

"Well," the young lady agreed then somewhat primly. "Now hold it real tight, won't you? And don't——"

Mr. Waddell hastened to fetch the ladder and set it in an advantageous position. Then he

gripped it very stoutly. Little by little the young lady groped her way up towards the top. He could detect the pressure of her feet as they stepped from rung to rung. Finally she paused for such a while that Thomas, grown anxious, could not resist taking a swift and reassuring glance upward.

"You're looking!" she said reproachfully, from her perch at the very top. In fact the little box was already in her grasp.

"But—" Thomas was going to remonstrate, waving both his hands.

Seeing him release his hold, the young lady lost confidence, and the first thing either of them knew, down she came tumbling, the whole distance of ten feet. Then it was that the soul of Mr. Waddell displayed its true worth. He caught the slender form easily in his arms, almost as if it had been a feather wafted downward.

"Good heavens!" he ejaculated. "You might have hurt yourself."

"Look at the seeds!" the young lady replied, when she was once again on her feet. "And really, I'm sure it was your fault."

Was she going to cry? Hastily and repentantly Thomas examined into the matter of the caraway. The little tin box lay nearly empty in the center of the store, and the seeds were scat-

tered every which way, as if the place were a garden.

"Never mind, we'll fix that all right," he said reassuringly.

And with the aid of a small whiskbroom, Mr. Waddell began to gather into their fold the wandering grains. It was warm in the store; and as he moved round on his knees, Thomas declared that never in all his life had he been warmer. He shouldn't have looked up. He shouldn't——

"I'll help you," the young lady decided suddenly.

Together they imprisoned the last of the caraway, and Thomas was obliged to admit her superiority in the business of collection. Finally they rose to their feet with sighs of relief.

"Really, Miss—— Miss——"

"Miss Summer."

"Miss Summer, I am very sorry to have caused you so much trouble," Thomas declared awkwardly. "But the Father seemed to need the caraway very much, you know."

"That's quite all right," she said cheerfully. "I was glad to help you, Mr.—— Mr.——"

"Waddell."

With that she weighed out a parcel of caraway and Thomas, having bowed a farewell, hurried off. Almost to the very end of the street, how-

ever, he kept remembering that Miss Summer had soft brown eyes. When he reached the comfortable little house, he found that Father Reginald had so far recovered that he felt it was unnecessary to use the medicine at once. He did inquire into the cause of the delay, however, and gradually coaxed out of Thomas a complete account of the story.

"It's a relief to know she didn't come by any injury falling down," the Franciscan remarked finally. "That would have been a disaster—a catastrophe, even. She's a fine girl, Thomas."

"Yes, Father," the keeper of bees agreed.

And after a moment he added: "You know, I've been wondering if she could sell some honey for me at the store? She could earn a little extra that way."

"I think that is an excellent idea," Father Reginald conceded enthusiastically, though the note of slyness in Thomas' voice had not escaped his attention. "Of course she can sell some for you. Why not? I'd settle the matter, though, before it gets too late along in the season."

The Franciscan rose and shook Mr. Waddell's hand. But on the way back to the monastery he shook his own head so regularly that you might have imagined there was something wrong with his neck. Every once in a while he also stopped

and twirled his cord vigorously round and round. "Made to suit, made to suit!" he murmured mysteriously.

But really it was only a few years later that Father Reginald, stopping at the house where the cherry tree was a-buzz with bees, asked, "Thomas how many people are there here?"

And the proud answer was, "Three."

X. A Matter of Dispute

HERE are so many quiet hours in the life at Saint Bonaventure's, and there is such a plenty of that blessed contentment which the Poor Man lavished upon his children, that it would be most surprising if some of the waves in the world round about were not stilled. As a matter of fact, many, many people in the neighborhood of the monastery can testify to the mysterious soothing power of its spires. But sometimes men and women are healed at heart without they themselves being aware of what has happened. Perhaps the beauty of an ideal or a resolution has stolen into their spirits when all the doors and windows seemed to be locked. Or possibly some brown-frocked minister of charity has forced his way into a sullen life, with a smile and a half-spoken benediction.

While busy with the task of census taking, Father Reginald was obliged to observe one day that the harmony for which Mr. Anselm Bachem's household had long been famed was gradually being bitten into by very harsh notes. He was

not at all a curious man, but the notes forced themselves upon him. Father Reginald, you see, often gathered much more than the arithmetic of people, as he went among them. In the case of the Bachems, he may be said to have advanced as far as their differential calculus.

"Good evening, everybody!" he had said cordially, entering the front door of the neat white house so tastefully trimmed with green shutters.

Mrs. Bachem rose from her chair in the northeast corner of the room. "Good evening, Father," she said soberly.

"Good evening, Father," echoed Mr. Bachem, untangling his legs from a sofa in the southwest corner and coming forward.

"Ah, ha!" Father Reginald signaled to himself at this moment; but to the world in general—or rather, to that part of it which now seemed a little out of joint—he said: "It's really a fine evening, isn't it? I don't believe I've ever heard the birds put so much life into their business of singing. And such a sunset! Just over the edge of the hill, you know."

The Franciscan made a gorgeous descriptive gesture. He always gave people the impression that he was mild and dreamy; and they never suspected that his eyes were fitted with much stronger lenses than their own.

"I'm glad there is something sunny somewhere. My!" Mr. Bachem grumbled.

"It is a comfort to realize that the birds, at least, aren't grumbling all the time," Mrs. Bachem declared with a sniffle.

"Ah, ha!" Father Reginald repeated to himself privately. But he went on asking questions and mentioning numerous topics of interest, until nearly a half-hour had gone by. Then, while he was bowing his departure at the front door, Mr. Bachem suddenly dashed after a hat and accompanied the reverend guest down the road. Father Reginald had seldom walked so rapidly.

"Don't you think the stars are *very* bright for so early in the summer?" he asked. "I can't remember anything like it."

"Yes—they are."

"And what excellent growing weather this is, Anselm! The farmers ought to be content and happy."

Mr. Bachem suddenly stood still and gave the priest a significant look. "By heaven, Father, if I don't wish I was a farmer then," he said.

Father Reginald, being a man wise in his generation, said nothing during a few moments. He knew that a fountain never rushes out of the ground when any one is watching. And yet he was most curious.

"Life is full of terrible cares," Mr. Bachem reported finally.

"And worries," the priest agreed.

"All the same I think I could put up with them all well enough, Father, if it weren't for something that hangs around my neck like a chunk of lead instead of being a blessing as it really should be."

The voice was so bitter and earnest that the Franciscan asked shrewdly, "Is it your—your conscience?"

"No, Father, not my conscience. It is my wife!"

"Yes, they are not always precisely the same thing," rejoined Father Reginald.

Mr. Bachem went on to outline the woeful condition of his romance. Now, after nine years of wedded existence, which had usually been calm enough, it turned out that he and his wife were quite unsuited one to the other. The trouble was much deeper than a mere clash of temperaments. When he wanted coffee for breakfast, she insisted upon having tea. Whatever interested him in the newspaper, struck her as being positive nonsense. And just the other day, to cap the whole affair, she had actually interrupted a conversation to call him a fool.

"I hope you answered by telling her she was an

angel?" Father Reginald inquired with salutary innocence.

Mr. Bacham shook his head vigorously. "I said I hadn't been a fool until the day I married her, Father. And since that time we haven't spoken to each other—not a single word!"

The priest remonstrated gently with his friend until they had reached the end of the street. Then he bade him good night, and called his attention to three groups of stars which were very splendid and benignant in the skies.

"This is certainly too bad!" Father Reginald told himself on the way up the hill to the monastery. And during the next few days he was driven to repeat the same phrase over and over again. Unquestionably the Bachems were on the outs. It became so evident that everybody noticed and discussed the subject with his or her friends. Even the dog at their house seemed to have been affected, because he permitted his tail to droop in a most dismal fashion. Yes, Mr. and Mrs. Bachem were no longer a happy couple; and Father Reginald for one did very much want them to be happy and to love each other.

But what could be done about the matter?

At precisely three o'clock one afternoon, the Franciscan happened to meet Mrs. Peters, a rather talkative lady who generally made him

listen quite a while. And now she began an account of her recent trip to the lakes and how bad people were nowadays.

"Mrs. Peters, I must tell you something that occurred to me lately," he said quickly. "Why not start a society of travelers? Why not get together and give each other the benefit of your experiences?"

"But, Father——"

"For instance, there is Mr. Bachem. As a young fellow he went all the way to South Carolina. Why, there must be a book of information locked up in that man!"

Mrs. Peters looked at the ground for a moment. Then she smiled. "Do you really believe, Father, that *I* could organize such a society?" she asked coyly. "It takes such a big tact, you know."

"Of course you can. Of course, Mrs. Peters! Now I'll tell you: go as soon as you can to call on Mr. Bachem. He's none too easy to handle, but *you* can manage it. Smile at him, make him think he is altogether the most wonderful man in the world. Tell him that unless he will do his share, he will disappoint you and all those interested in improving their minds. But perhaps it would be best to keep the thing a secret between you and Mr. Bachem—for a while. I never saw

such a man for shying from a crowd. You'll see!"

Once again Mrs. Peters inspected the ground. "Oh, it does really seem such a useful idea, Father," she said. "I'll promise you—yes, Father, I'll promise not to disappoint you!"

They parted, and Father Reginald went on his way chuckling not merely at Mrs. Peters, but at the whole world as well. Yet ever so often he seemed a little grave, as if there were a problem of importance on his mind. Perhaps he was thinking of the beautiful words with which Our Lord blessed marriage, making it a sacrament and a high road of love. And again, perhaps, he was thinking of his task.

Anyhow, when he reached the post office, who should be standing on the steps of that august building but Mr. Richard Titus! For the benefit of those who have never met Mr. Titus, it may be asserted that he was a tall, dark man with bushy mustaches and a reputation for oratory. The state legislature had heard his voice—at least when votes were taken—and every time there was a parish festival he had something to say, even without being urged.

"Well, Father Reginald!" he declared. "What could be more appropriate than our meeting precisely here this afternoon? It gives me great

pleasure, and I thank you for the opportunity——"

"How's everything—Dick?" the priest asked, to remind the eminent politician—by way of a guileless innuendo—that he was remembered as a gawky lad in long trousers. "I've just been thinking of you. It seems to me, Dick, that our women voters aren't giving half the time they should to duties of citizenship. Indeed, some of them don't seem to care at all. Too bad, isn't it?"

Mr. Titus cleared his throat. "I've noticed that very same thing, Father. Yes, I have! And between ourselves, I can't see how the integrity of the Constitution and the earnestness of our political heritage are to be preserved unless—unless, Father—unless——"

The hand of Mr. Titus emphasized the supreme importance of the word "unless." But Father Reginald went straight to work.

"This town is badly in need of a man like you to organize our women and show them where their duty as citizens and voters lies," he declared. "It's a shame that things are in such a desperate condition. Richard, hasn't the idea ever occurred to you?"

"Well, see here, Father——"

"Now, why don't you choose some first-rate,

influential woman and persuade her to organize a civics club? Mrs. Anselm Bachem is just the person for you! Go to see her as soon as you can, talk the matter over with her, and get to work. She will respond, but I must say she is so shy of the public that you'd better keep the matter a secret between the two of you for—well, a week. It will pay you in the end, Richard!"

Mr. Titus folded his arms and stared into space. "I really don't feel equal to this great work, Father," he said then. "But perhaps I ought to do as you say."

"Of course you should. And don't put it off more than a day, Richard. Good-by!"

They shook hands with feeling, and once again the priest hurried along the road to the monastery. In his heart the golden angel of laughter was busy with the harp of smiles, and of all the winged messengers of Heaven, surely this one appealed most to Father Reginald. Yet there was a strain of gravity in the music this evening; and when he had come nearly to the top of the hill he looked back upon the roofs in the valley, and begged the angel to enter under them all.

A few days later, as he was hurrying down the street, who should come out and call to the Franciscan but Mrs. Bachem, in a blue apron. He stopped and wished her a good morning.

"There is something I should like to ask you about, Father," she said both nervously and firmly. "Of course you may not have time to listen just now?"

"Time has been made for things of importance," he replied earnestly.

She looked in four directions and then began: "It's about my husband, Father. Oh, after so many years in one and the same house, I don't understand why I should have to be accusing him of what is going on now. But there is no way out of it, Father!"

"What on earth has he done?" the priest gasped.

"Well, perhaps it isn't altogether his fault," the good wife granted with a sigh. "There are bad and designing creatures in this world. But after all these years, Father!"

The stricken Mrs. Bachem looked very much as if she would like to shed tears. And so the priest hurriedly coaxed out of her the entire account of what had taken place—how Mrs. Peters had first come to talk with Mr. Bachem over the fence, and had then actually and mysteriously ventured into the yard and sat down on a chair; how they had gone off down the road talking together most cordially and confidentially, and how at the same time he had become so

surly and silent about the house that there was no living with the man.

"Have you done your best to make things pleasant for him?" Father Reginald questioned. "But I'm sure you have!"

"Anyhow, for nine years I've tried *hard,* Father."

"Well, he probably isn't worth it," the priest concluded bluntly. "Of course you thought he was all right when you married him, but . . . we are often deceived!"

He said nothing further. Nor did Mrs. Bachem. Indeed, something like refutation crept into her eyes and made him feel comfortable. But he left her with the promise to reflect on the problem and see what could be done.

What could be done! Father Reginald was wise enough to understand that you cannot clean a human house by merely painting it nicely on the outside. Therefore, knowing the Bachems as well as he did, his reflections were quite optimistic. And on the very next day but one, he was stopped near the outskirts of the town by Mr. Bachem.

"Good afternoon, Anselm!" he said heartily. "Isn't this a splendid day to be up and about? Such a wealth of sunshine!"

Mr. Bachem sighed deeply. "I am walking

about with a knife in my heart, Father," he muttered.

"A what?"

"A knife in my heart! Who would have thought that after nine years I should be forced to begin believing my wife capable of—of——"

"Anselm! What on earth can have happened?"

"There are men on this earth for whom killing is much too good. They go around talking and purring like cats, but at heart they are thieves and robbers. Yes, Father, robbers! Oh, I could choke this fellow Titus!"

Then, as they walked along under the trees, Father Reginald listened to the outraged husband's complaints. He was informed of the bland manner in which Mr. Titus had wormed his way into the family household; of how he happened to stop—just happened, of course—every evening after supper; and even of how Mrs. Bachem had actually stooped so far as to address the fellow in front of his own house. By this time the indignant Mr. Bachem was shaking his fist most vigorously.

"Well, well," the priest remarked sympathetically. "Of course I don't like to put embarrassing questions, but . . . have you given your wife every reason to believe that she was right

in marrying you? Have you always been a patient and loving husband?"

"I have done the best I knew how to do, Father."

"It can't be that she isn't the right sort of woman, Anselm?" the Franciscan asked rather sadly. "And yet—one hesitates to say these things, and yet——"

Father Reginald shrugged his shoulders as if they, at least, were firmly convinced that nothing is so likely to be subject to erroneous interpretation as the quality of wives. But a dim, spontaneous glint of opposition came quite suddenly into the right eye of Mr. Bachem—a glint which intensely delighted the Franciscan.

But for all that, things in the Bachem household became more and more unsuited to the insurance of domestic tranquility. Jealousy made both parties believe the world bent on robbing each of the other. Life began to look like armed silence. And the figures of Mrs. Peters and Mr. Titus, always sinister, hovered on the horizon.

Then, one day, both received letters marked, "To be opened at 7 P. M." The tantalizing mystery of these epistles destroyed what appetite for supper there had been in their bosoms. They considered the probabilities of authorship, and predicted the most vivid and alluring contents.

And when seven o'clock came, both retreated to their corners and opened the envelopes.

The writer was Father Reginald, who made a series of explanations coupled with certain reflections. Long and earnestly Mr. and Mrs. Bachem examined their manuscripts. Meanwhile the clock ticked so loud in the room that it came to seem almost the humming motor of an airship.

"Regina!" Mr. Bachem called softly.

"Yes, Anselm?"

"If you and I were nine years younger, would you marry me?"

Mrs. Bachem smiled. "Don't ask such foolish questions!" she said.

XI. The Shadow of a Saint

HADOWS, each and every one of them, are mysteries; and in some there is a larger secret that the human mind will ever disclose. Now Saint Bonaventure's is usually a place of light and peace —a high hill that welcomes all the sunny winds of heaven and every airy grace that warms the soul. But there are nights when the long corridors are draped in brooding gloom. Deep recesses in the cloister walls are impenetrable to the eye, and the fury of a storm howls in them as might a prisoned giant in his dungeon, or a lost soul on the shores of doom. Then, sometimes, the Franciscans cross themselves as they hurry through the shadows, and think of death as the pale snow is lashed against the twilit window-panes. But the shades that lengthen under the moon and the stars are the most baffling of all—ghostly, pensive reflections in which there is mirrored dimly the first gray creative light that broke over chaos.

During the early years of the monastery's

existence, it was the custom at Saint Bonaventure's to say matins in common, at midnight, during Lent. When the bell rang out, everybody rose and moved slowly down the chill corridors to the stalls in the lighted sanctuary.

The ceremony was often beautiful and edifying, because the magnificent starkness of the psalmody is really quite as wonderful as the monumental beauty of the Escurial or of Ara Coeli, which looms above the topmost hill of Rome. But there were many in the cloister who grumbled at a practice which they said was "too severe," "old-fashioned," and "inefficient." Other establishments under the same rule had discontinued the custom of rousing everybody at such an ungainly hour. Why not Saint Bonaventure's? One pointed out in vain to these disgruntled ones (so says the tradition, at least) that conditions elsewhere might be different.

The duty of ringing the matins bell devolved upon Brother Cyprian, a tall young man with a very matter-of-fact mind and a certain awkwardness of gait. When he received the appointment, he asked of the Father Superior, "How long shall I ring?"

"About twenty strokes of the bell, Brother," was the answer.

And so he counted out twenty each time to

make sure that the rule was obeyed to the letter.

Nevertheless, Brother Cyprian was often impressed, as he went to the bell tower, by the silent majesty of the night. He did not understand the shadows, but he felt they might be whispering . . . whispering something. Below the windows of the cloistered passage-way leading from the monastery, the community dead waited, in their spare resting places. On every one of those little crosses, the Brother reflected, there was written *"Hic jacet"* and the name of a Franciscan who, like himself, had once risen for matins at midnight. It was therefore only natural that he should form a habit of saying, as he passed the narrow white windows, "May they rest in peace!"

When the brother arose on one particular night, he noted the beauty of a late snow, over which a new moon hung like a brazier of burning oil. He stopped to feast his eyes on the white peace; but suddenly the mystery of the scene filled his soul with a vague uneasiness, so that he hurried to the tower faster than was usual. Into this little belfry room the moonlight streamed through a tall, arched pane, so that the floor was gleaming white and the bell rope a silver cord. The heavy beams of the ceiling above were mistily black, like shrouded ebony.

Brother Cyprian paused as he entered, and said to himself that never had he stood in a more attractive room. But in another moment this thought had vanished before a much more startling impression. Was it real? Or were the shadows assuming strange forms? What he seemed to see was this:—another Franciscan near the bell rope, whose hood was capped over a head inclined so far downward that only the flowing beard was visible. The hands were drawn up into the sleeves and the whole figure was motionless. In fact, Brother Cyprian was quite sure his eyes had deceived him.

He rubbed his eyes and said, "Bah! I am dreaming." Then he stepped boldly forward and raised his hands to grasp the rope.

Then the shadowy figure moved: two hands came out of the sleeves and reached for the bell cord, though the body remained quietly in its place. In amazement Brother Cyprian stared into the dimly lighted space, and was terrified to meet the gaze of two eyes in which there seemed to be a great penitence as well as a great sadness. He put out his hand, but it encountered nothing. But when he had drawn back, the figure was still there, silent and motionless as before.

Now the thought, "A spirit!" ran through the

Brother's mind, and he remembered the little crosses over which snow and moonlight were immaculate and fanciful. He could think of nothing else. Running wildly, he knocked at the door of Brother Remigius, who was also his brother in the flesh, and roused him.

"What is the matter?" demanded the awakened man when he saw the expression on his brother's face. "You look as if you had seen a ghost."

"I have," answered Brother Cyprian promptly. "There is something very strange in the bell tower. Will you come with me?"

"All right," agreed the other somewhat indifferently; and together they walked down the stairs, through the cloistered passage-way where the narrow white windows looked out upon the graves, and into the tower.

Nothing was visible there excepting the moonlight and the simple room, neither of which even so much as suggested an apparition.

Brother Cyprian smiled and then burst into a laugh. Just as he had been greatly frightened before, so now he was eager to pass the matter off as a joke. "I'm sorry I caused you so much trouble," he said. "For some foolish reason I thought I had seen a spirit. Keep quiet about it, won't you?"

Brother Remigius nodded, the bell rang out very sedately, and the matins were no different from others chanted by the light of candles. On the following night, however, the brother could not help feeling just the least bit nervous as he approached the tower. There was no moon, and from a heavily clouded sky snow flurries fell gently, gayly upon the earth.

"I wonder if what happened last night *was* only a dream?" he mused as he put his hand on the latch of the door. The icy air of the lonely room beat upon his face as he entered; and sensible of a distinct chill, he hurried to the bell rope and pulled vigorously, quickly.

Just after he had counted twelve strokes, he turned to behold immediately in front of him the same shadowy figure with outstretched hands—less distinct this time, but still definite and much more convincing because there was no moonlight to account for the luster of the form.

With a gasp of dismay, Brother Cyprian dropped the rope and ran quickly to the monastery. He arrived in the church quite out of breath, and after matins had been chanted sought out the Father Superior and begged leave to speak.

When the permission had been granted, Brother Cyprian narrated his experience, at

which the listener smiled. "I hope you won't mind if I appoint Brother Samuel ringer of the midnight bell," he said gently. "Perhaps your nerves are a little unsteady, Brother."

But in all truth this new choice was not altogether happy. Brother Samuel, a middle-aged and unusually gifted man, was much more likely to see visions than his predecessor. At all events, when midnight arrived on the next day, the Father Superior was aroused by an agitated knock at the door of his cell.

Brother Samuel greeted him with a hasty *"Ave Maria"* and a countenance that expressed amazement and fear.

"Now what can be the trouble?" demanded the Father Superior somewhat sternly. He was getting tired of so much credulity among the Brethren.

"Reverendissime," replied Brother Samuel, who was unusually fond of Latin, "I beg pardon, but there is nothing to do but tell you what has happened. A ghost is standing in the bell tower!"

"That is ridiculous," said the Father Superior to the trembling brother. "Wake Brother Remigius and ask him to go with you to ring the bell. It is already past the hour."

And once again Brother Remigius, grumbling

into his beard, failed to see any spectral visitor and reported as much. But for all his hesitancy, the Father Superior felt ill at ease and quite unable to make up his mind about either what there was in the matter or what method of investigation should be adopted. At first he thought of going to the tower in person, but reflected that the dignity of his position might be impaired if some one were walking in his sleep, or if. . . . "I do not believe in ghosts of this character, though there is the matter of possession," he told himself. "Nor should I know how to deal with one if he came. It is out of the question for me to go in person."

All during matins the Superior was distracted, nor did the problem give him any rest during the morning of that day. He considered each monk in particular; but though there were many pious and learned men, none seemed exactly suited to the company of a wandering spirit. Finally, after he had rejected all the more brilliant members of the community, he recalled a priest who lived with the boys at the college.

"Father Leo is the very man I want!" murmured the Superior decisively, and forthwith summoned him.

At first sight no one would have detected in this tranquil, golden-hearted little priest any spe-

cial qualifications for dealing with beings not of this earth. Even his ability to direct purely terrestial persons was somewhat open to question: he greeted people with the most candid cheerfulness, effaced himself before them, and never seemed to mind if they forgot to show him any consideration.

But all this was forgotten when you came to know his power over boys. Timid, willful, uncertain young hearts welcomed him to all they had, no matter how tight they were locked against all other men. The city of adolescence opened all its gates to him. It was of these things that the Father Superior, who knew his children, had been mindful when he summoned Father Leo. "Surely," he had thought, "the ghost—if it be a ghost—must be something very like a boy. One must know how to deal with both."

The summons reached the little priest just as he was completing a heap of Latin *pensa* through which, as he noted sadly and with more than one shake of the head, crimson ink had spread like a fire through an old house. Irregular verbs were difficult, of course, and not so pleasant to the touch as baseballs and bats. Boys did not often see, with Doctor Johnson, the beauty of *"Formosam resonare doces Amaryllida silvas."* And yet they were wonderfully fine lads, all of them.

"Thank you for telling me, Brother," he said cheerfully to the Father Superior's messenger, and hastily straightened his cord without even asking himself what the purpose of the summons might be.

His astonishment at the revelations of his Superior was very great, indeed. Nothing about the cloister had ever suggested a ghost, nor was he able to recall even the flimsiest personal acquaintance with one in the past. Yet he did not doubt for a moment that there might be an apparition in the bell tower. He merely wondered rather vaguely why he had been selected to investigate the rumor.

"We shall expect you to ring the bell at midnight, then, Father Leo," said the Superior finally. "I would send a brother as well, only it seems imperative that you should go alone. Please discuss the matter with no one."

"Very well," replied Father Leo.

When he arose at midnight, the world about him lay very still. The gas lamps in the corridors sputtered occasionally as he went along, and in the passage-way he stopped to whisper a prayer for the dead below. Clouds were racing across the moon, but the earth was unruffled by any breeze, though stalked by giant shadows in the wavering light. Father Leo was altogether

calm, however. "If there be a ghost," he reflected, "why then, after all, it is only a ghost. And the suffering souls will profit by my intention."

It never entered his mind to be afraid. He opened the tower door, and saw nothing but the window, the gloomy bulk of the walls, and the rope. "I shall simply ring the bell," he thought, with a slight trace of disappointment, "and tell the Father Superior I saw nothing unusual."

But as he groped for the cord, he suddenly became conscious of a figure standing, in all truth, before him—the figure of a Franciscan, just as had been described, in cowl and cord. After he had closed his eyes and opened them again, to make sure this was no fantasy, he realized the solemn unusualness of the occasion.

"Peace be with you!" said Father Leo kindly, translating the great Latin phrase lest the strange visitor might not understand. "Will you be kind enough to wait until I have rung the bell?"

But the luminous figure stretched forth its hands so appealingly that the priest was puzzled for a moment. "Perhaps *you* wish to ring?" he suggested. "You may do so, of course!"

And somehow the figure moved toward the dangling rope, seized it and rang the bell in such a strange, solemn melody that every one in the

monastery was astonished and listened to the tones with awe. It was as if some old, old carillon were singing of penitence and the blessed wounds of Christ; and there were many who confessed to having heard the clamor and sobbing of many bells interwoven. No words could describe the solemn beauty of this music.

Father Leo bowed his head in dutiful recognition. Then, as he glanced up at the end of the strokes, he beheld the shining face of his spirit companion; and it was the countenance of a Saint—radiant, benignant, watchful. He sank upon his knees, conscious of a wealth of mellow light, through which some one seemed to say, "Peace be with you!" But soon all was dark and still, and Father Leo saw that he knelt alone.

The little priest went to the church for matins so much exalted that the Father Superior and all the rest knew that some marvel had taken place. Having requested all to sit for a moment, the Superior said, "You must tell us what happened in the tower this night, Father Leo."

And at the end of his story, the man who was beloved by boys folded his hands very humbly. "Far be it from me to declare that what happened must be this—or that. But I know, my Brothers, that I have seen the face of a saint."

Father Leo has been dead these many years,

and matins are no longer chanted at midnight in the chapel of Saint Bonaventure's. This narrative is therefore based only on tradition. But nobody in the monastery would agree to doubt it for a single moment.

XII. Stirred Waters

URING nine full months out of the year, the serenity of Saint Bonaventure's is badly jarred by the antics of its college. If often happens that while the Franciscans are gathered together in the monastery chapel for office and meditation, the baseball diamond is alive with running figures and something like a tidal wave of sound. Occasionally there is even an argument. Boys, as almost any one will tell you, are a noisy lot. Sometimes a person loses patience with them altogether. But, as a wise man once calculated very carefully, a good half of the human race has been, is, or will be boys—and surely this is a fact which ought to make an impression upon the most unwilling. Besides which, we may as well admit that without its college Saint Bonaventure's might once in a while be tempted to fall asleep.

When Father Charles, energetic and large of figure, was appointed Prefect of the upper study-hall, people nodded their heads approvingly.

"He'll make them toe the mark!" "He'll get the rascals by their necks!" were expressions repeated so often that they became tiresome. As for the boys, a look of worry followed them about during at least half a dozen days. But if the truth had been given a chance to talk, it would certainly have stood up and declared that Father Charles kept a great deal more thunder than lightning in his soul.

"Brennan, Carrig, Kreutzer and Masters!" he called out one afternoon in September. "Those whose names I have just read will see me immediately after supper!"

The quartet was united by a series of glances.

"Where, Father?" Brennan asked shyly.

"In my room."

That sounded ominous. When you went to the Prefect's room, oratory or even worse was in the air. Ears had been boxed in that room. Interminable memory lines had been assigned there. The quartet looked dubious.

"You'll get yours—you will!" envious little Johnny Egan shouted over towards them at the supper table.

"So will you!" Mr. Kreutzer predicted with certainty.

The quartet deserved its name in more ways than one. First of all, it really did sing, though

sometimes with a note of flippancy scarcely proper in students devoted to the pursuit of serious knowledge. Then it was catcher and all the bases on one of the baseball teams. And finally, whenever there was a disturbance these four were sure to be somewhere near the bottom of it. All in all, the quartet enjoyed a reputation. But it wasn't quite prepared to say that it enjoyed Father Charles.

"Well, now," that burly Prefect declared when the four were lined up in his presence immediately before the armchair and on a line with a picture which—quite unintentionally, of course—displayed a holy martyr being scourged with whips, "well, now, we are going to get down to business. Every one of you knows why I have called this little meeting, I dare say?"

"No, Father," Mr. Brennan replied very innocently.

"No? Then I'll tell you. It's because of certain rumors to the effect that the four of you are rascals. Through and through! You stole the jam last June. Oh, I know very well you stole the jam! One of you was the ghost who paraded through the lower dormitory. There are two farmers who swear positively that it was you who stole apples. Shall I keep on?"

"But, Father——"

"We have no time to argue," said Father Charles abruptly, folding his hands into his sleeves. "I merely wanted you to understand that henceforth, while *I* am Prefect, you had better watch your step. I think there is such an expression as 'watch your step.' That is all I have to say now."

"Thank you, Father," murmured Mr. Masters.

"Thank you, Father," echoed the other three, retreating through the door.

And for a time the quartet was really most exemplary. It got into no scrapes, its songs were extremely classical. But Father Charles made the unfortunate blunder of advertising his success. "We have order this year, have you noticed?" he inquired openly. "There is no trouble at all. And that is entirely due to my having put those four villains in their places."

The quartet sulked at that. It might have surrendered, but it could not endure the taunts of victory. And so it began to talk things over, and one night even ventured a bright new song. Nevertheless, the quartet was not without prudence. Caution was its slogan. Father Charles was a shade more formidable than anything it had hitherto encountered.

Then, one free afternoon during the middle of October, it happened that Mr. Brennan sat prac-

tically alone in the upper study-hall, finishing a marvelous detective story. The villain was just about to be trapped when Father Charles entered, with an extremely fat guest. The guest did very little of the talking.

"Oh, yes, our boys are a healthy lot," the Prefect declared. "Their food is plain and always excellently cooked. The water at Saint Bonaventure's is pumped from a spring clear as crystal. It——"

"What would you do in the case of fire?" the visitor asked suddenly, through his nose.

Father Charles coughed severely. "Why, that's simple enough," he said. "You see, the water is pumped into a large tank up under the roof of this very building. It has a great capacity. Indeed, I may say that it has an unusually great capacity."

"But it can't be very high," the visitor suggested.

"No, but it's very, very wide. In fact, if you were to stand beside that tank, you might fancy for just a moment that you were looking at a pond."

With that the two of them passed out again through the door. But Father Charles, all unwittingly, had made a deep impression upon the bright mind of Mr. Brennan. What interest was

there now in a detective story for that young man? He had an idea of such charm and brilliance that he hurried outside immediately and summoned the quartet.

"Fellows," he declared with some symptoms of excitement, "do you know that our water is pumped from a spring clear as crystal?"

"Aw, what do we care about where the water comes from, anyhow?" Carrig asked with a deprecatory shrug. He had expected better things. Brennan enjoyed a reputation.

"What are you driving at, Slim?" the others wanted to know.

"Well, this water which is pumped from a spring clear as crystal—don't you bother me, Bill, when I'm talking—runs right into a big tank under the roof of the main building."

"'Spose it does? What then?"

"If you were to stand beside that tank, you'd think it was a pond, it's so big," Mr. Brennan continued to explain scientifically.

The others still persisted in looking dubious. They sniffed something in keeping with the best traditions of the quartet, but they couldn't make out what it was.

"Don't you see? If a guy was to want to go in swimmin' on a nice warm day, why that tank might be just the sweetest——"

"Gee!"

Perhaps it was due partly to the marvelous weather of that particular October that the quartet looked itself up and down and reflected upon the savory discovery. Nothing so good in the way of adventure had come to Saint Bonaventure's in a long while. It was the find of a lifetime. And incidentally it was a chance to square accounts with Father Charles.

"I wonder how you could get up to that tank?" Masters wanted to know.

"Is there a ladder?" asked Carrig.

"There ain't any elevator," Mr. Brennan explained satirically.

Then the quartet set out on its voyage of exploration. One by one they filtered into the deserted building and up the stairs. Finally all four gathered in front of an uppermost door, guarded mysteriously with a padlock and key. Twenty minutes later, with the aid of a screwdriver, a hammer and a broken-off rifle barrel—treasured by Mr. Masters for some reason—they had loosened the staple and got through the door. Mrs. Bluebeard could not have been more curious about the realms which lay beyond. First came a staircase which cast itself upward at a dizzy angle and creaked alarmingly with disuse. Beyond that there was an immense reach of rafters and beams,

shrouded in a pale darkness lighted only by windows at either gable of the building.

"This 'ud be a nifty joint for spooks, I'll say," Kreutzer confided, revealing his inmost heart.

"Spooks! My eye!" Mr. Brennan scolded. "But what I want to know is, where's that tank?"

"There!" Kreutzer pointed to a long strip of galvanized iron. "I'll bet it's right there."

The quartet groped its way in the direction indicated, and sure enough! Before them glistened a quiet expanse of crystal water, very cool and inviting indeed. The sun had beaten upon the rafters all day until they were actually hot. Something like a cordial invitation seemed to issue from the motionless silvery surface. And the quartet itself was perspiring.

"Gee!" cried the four adventurers in concert.

"That's the finest swimming tank I ever saw in my life!" Mr. Brennan concluded triumphantly.

The others nodded their heads in whole-hearted approval. But the hour was already so far advanced that nothing could be done about it for that day. Consequently they stole quietly down the stairs again, with a solemn agreement concerning the next afternoon. The staple was so carefully replaced that nobody on earth would have dreamed it had been tampered with.

At night Mr. Brennan couldn't resist speaking

to Father Charles on the subject of drinking water. "I've just been reading that malaria is caused by drinking water," he declared innocently. "How does water cause that, Father?"

"Oh, that's very simple," the Prefect answered learnedly. "When water isn't pure, it contains a number of parasites—which are very small bugs, you know. These carry the malaria to the human system. But you needn't be afraid of anything of that sort at Saint Bonaventure's."

Father Charles twined his fingers round his cord very confidentially.

"Why, Father?" asked Mr. Brennan docilely.

"The water here is pumped from a crystal spring. No impurities can get into it. Why, there isn't any better water in the whole state!"

With that Mr. Brennan expressed himself completely satisfied. But the quartet chuckled appreciatively.

On the next afternoon, the four gathered at the appointed hour, stole up the creaking stairs, and undressed. The water was cold, but glorious. Such is the nature of boys that if it had been four times colder it would still have been glorious. After an hour they tiptoed warily downstairs again, the most refreshed and jovial villains ever entered on the books at Saint Bonaventure's.

For several afternoons thereafter the baseball

diamond missed them. Other lads began to suspect the quartet of having reformed, and even of planning to join the order. And Father Charles was charmed, to say the least.

Then one morning, the Rector of the College entered the upper study-hall looking very grave. "I have something to tell you, gentlemen, that is highly important," he said. "Please don't let it frighten you, but promise me you will listen and be careful. John Egan was taken sick yesterday with malaria."

A hush settled upon the study-hall—a hush which, incidentally, nearly crushed the quartet.

"Be sure of what you drink," the Rector continued mercilessly. "Germs of the disease are often found in drinking water. Now, please pray for John Egan."

The Rector left the study-hall, but the impact of his words bowled Mr. Brennan into a melancholy shot through with visions of three dozen Saint Bonaventure boys in their beds, sick with malaria, dying even. He tried hard to translate Cicero, but the first words he read were, "How long, O Cataline, wilt thou abuse our patience?" When the time came for bed, he tossed himself down to lie awake an hour, stabbed by a guilty conscience. Finally he could stand it no longer. Rising, he groped his way to where Masters slept,

to find that young gentleman similarly disturbed.

"But it's all my fault," Brennan groaned. "I was the one who started it! Bill, to-morrow I'm going to Father Charles' room and 'fess up. There's no use hiding."

"Slim, that will be awful," Masters protested.

"I know it will be. But I've got to!"

Already Mr. Brennan felt like a hero, and knew that the feeling is extremely uncomfortable. When the next day came, the quartet at first insisted on confessing in a body. But to this their chief refused to listen. He and he alone was responsible. He would therefore shoulder the blame. And at length the quartet accepted this version with mournful finality.

Mr. Brennan rapped at Father Charles' room.

"Come in!" the Prefect's burly voice commanded.

The culprit opened the door and stood twirling his cap with anxious fingers. "Good morning, Father," he said. "I—I have come to tell you something."

"Yes?"

"You see, it's this way, Father," Mr. Brennan stumbled on. "The quartet hasn't been as good as you—you thought it was, Father. And it's all my fault."

"What on earth have you done now?" the Pre-

fect demanded, with visions of boys in jail, houses on fire, and what not.

The culprit stumbled through his explanation. He described the horrible crime in all its details. In conclusion he blurted out how sorry they were, now that Johnny Egan lay suffering the consequences. His voice began to crack.

Father Charles arose and growled. "Such are always the fruits of sin and disobedience!" he declared sternly. "It was I whom you were trying to injure, and not Johnny Egan, eh? And now you are sorry, eh?"

Father Charles would really have liked to box Mr. Brennan's ears. But suddenly he seemed to remember something, and to take a kindly interest in the face, so utterly crestfallen, which quailed before his gaze.

"You are a young rascal," he said definitely. "But at any rate I may as well tell you the truth. Johnny Egan was taken sick with malaria because he drank water from the creek. And besides, the water in the tank upstairs is used for washing only. You aren't responsible. But let it be a lesson to you!"

Then for some reason he came forward impetuously and placed his hands on the boy's shoulders. "What a fine Franciscan you would make, lad!" he exclaimed with deeper feeling than anybody

had credited to Father Charles. "Have you ever thought about that?"

Mr. Brennan hadn't. But it is quite true, nevertheless, that after some years had gone by he appeared in a brown habit with a cowl, and was respectfully addressed as Father Pascal.

XIII. The Reformation of Adelia

ORIGINALLY there may have been something virtuous in the very respectable hill upon which Saint Bonaventure's is established: at any rate, it is quite alone in so far as neighboring hills are concerned and from the monastery you may look out—if you can find a perch higher than the trees—upon miles and miles of farm land, orchards and meadows. The only really friendly thing is the attenuated village which has gathered round the base of the hill. Its single street wanders along most leisurely in a scattery semicircle. But most of the houses seem to have been set apart on purpose and give the impression of spurning connection with anything more leisurely than the monastery hill.

Before one of these houses Father Reginald halted just after the dusk had thickened, one evening during May. He shook his head at the solitary lamp that glimmered through a shutter. "It is clear that she is not meant for life in the convent," he declared to himself. "If only. . . ."

In this particular house the daughter of Thomas Berner lived alone with her cat. Her father had died when she was twenty-four, and her mother she had never known; so that, apart from the church whose spires she could see only by mounting to the garret, and the previously mentioned cat, Adelia had no companions in this world. Generally she sat on the porch, sewing or reading from a large book on the art of cooking. But apparently neither of these occupations had any real goal other than to provide an opportunity for frowning upon sundry bad boys who entertained designs upon a grizzled apple tree that stood in the yard.

It need scarcely be added that Adelia practiced none of the blandishments for which her sex has been famed for some time. Her hair lay close and straight against her head (though it was dark and brilliant hair), the sound of her shoes was like the thumping of wood, and on Sundays she wore a severe black gown which indicated that she was still in mourning for her father. It was also rather well known that Adelia had reached the age of twenty-nine and had formed the habit of never eating bread which was less than four days old.

Father Reginald turned through the gate and went up to the silent house. Although he was

familiar with all the circumstances we have been at some pains to enumerate, he saw much that was admirable in Miss Berner. She was also something of a weight upon his conscience. More than once he fancied that if only—but so many suggestions crowded themselves behind the charitable "if" that his meditations were soon utterly out of control.

In answer to his knock and "Good evening," Miss Berner fluttered about in an attempt to light the hanging lamp and dust the chairs in her creaky little parlor. And all the while she was wondering what could have brought the Franciscan at this hour. It was the shockingly unusual hour of seven-thirty.

"I ain't dressed for company, Father. You'll have to excuse me," she said apologetically. "I've been gettin' in some of my garden this afternoon. You can't tell about the weather."

"There is a great deal of pleasure in a garden, Adelia," he admitted. "But you should see more of the world, my child. If only—" here he bit his lip—"you could find some real work to do, and see how much people really need your help!"

"Nobody needs me so as you could notice it, Father," Adelia replied with a sage nod. "But there is something in what you say about seein' more of the world. There ain't much to look at,

just on one street. I've never been away from Saint Bonaventure's, Father."

"Well, why not take the train some fine morning, Adelia, and——"

"But the train is three miles away, Father. I never seen or heard a train."

"You've never seen the *train?*" demanded the priest, with a gasp which only his long years of self-control prevented from being a shriek. "My dear child! We shall have to arrange at once to bring you in touch with civilization. Of course" —this he added under his breath—"I am hardly a lover of railroads and coal smoke, but they will at least make her understand the value of fresh air!"

The rest of the conversation was rather perfunctory. But that evening Father Reginald paced the floor of his cell devising methods of cure for the staleness of Adelia. The crisp, scented evening in which the sinking sun, the twitter of robins and the drone of belated bumble bees seemed to merge as in one natural element, was not in the least stale; and perhaps it was this which gave Father Reginald an idea. He sat down, chuckled, slapped his thigh, and then, rising, walked to and fro very quickly, with his hands buried in his sleeves.

And therefore it happened that on the follow-

ing Thursday Joseph, the official teamster of Saint Bonaventure's, halted his wagon before Adelia's dwelling-place. Joseph was a middle-aged, candid person with large blue eyes, freckles, and a cheerful disposition. He took whatever cargo he was instructed to take, and so loaded up Miss Berner without much ado. The wagon was a comfortable, lumbering vehicle, the box of which happened to be filled (of all things!) with empty receptacles for the transportation of beer; and the destination, this morning—oh, several years ago—was a brewery some seven miles distant, from which Saint Bonaventure's derived its only beverage except water.

It may be inferred that Miss Adelia, when she had ascended to her seat on the wagon and taken care not to notice the surprised stares of one or two neighbors, sat in vivid contrast with her environment.

But they were soon off; and Joseph talked almost incessantly, first because he was nervous, and second because there was nothing he enjoyed more. For the benefit of Adelia he attached to every landmark along the road a history which, in nine cases out of ten, was alarmingly non-historical. For a long while Adelia sat as stolid in her place as the black dress on her body, eagerly consuming everything to which Joseph gave utter-

ance, but regarding the man himself with prim contempt.

At last it happened that something contagious in her companion's good nature made her feel better than she could remember having felt since childhood. "It's a very pleasant morning, ain't it?" she ejected timidly into the conversation just as the cheerful Joseph was approaching the climax of a narrative about the ghost which had inhabited Mr. Tinker's barn.

"Yes, so it is," he murmured.

Adelia had gained the upper hand, but her lack of experience was obvious. "Didn't you say we would see the train before we got to the brewery?" she asked.

"That's it exactly," Joseph replied. "At the depot we ask if there are any packages, and at the brewery we have lunch. The train is all right, but not much to look at. The brewery is a wonder! Wait until you see the enormous casks and the beer foaming up in them—the great piles of barley and hops, and the stacks of bottles, and——"

"But I 'spose it's terribly noisy, isn't it?" was Adelia's disconcerting comment.

"It is a trifle," conceded Joseph, now distinctly aware of an effective cross-current.

"I don't like noise," she declared.

"Why not?" asked Joseph innocently. But they had reached the outskirts of the neighborhood metropolis, and after driving first up one street and then down another, they saw the red brick of the railway station looming into view. In front of this building there stood a train, the virtues and different parts of which Joseph explained in triumphant detail. Miss Adelia, however,—though inwardly she was terrified by the locomotive that snorted ominously under its soot, —calmly surveyed the baggage-car, the cab, and the three passenger coaches.

"What do you think of it?" Joseph asked doubtfully.

"What a pity folks don't put curtains on them windows!" was the only comment she ventured.

Joseph agreed that the absence of curtains was, indeed, regrettable, but wondered in his heart how a person who had never before seen a train could presume to criticize the public institution of railways.

Having gathered a few parcels for the monastery, he drove on and out to the brewery. At sight of the squat façade of this structure, Miss Adelia professed to notice certain unseemly odors. It was in vain that the gentlemanly Joseph urged her to enter and inspect the building. She persisted in keeping her seat on the wagon and

holding a handkerchief tight against her nose. This article of clothing she removed just long enough to explain to her disconsolate escort that she was sure the brewery was no place for ladies to be seen in. Joseph, lacking precise information on this delicate subject, was forced to transact his business with a sigh over the mystery of woman.

"Now we shall eat our lunch, Miss Berner," he finally asserted with evident pleasure. "The cold air always gives me an appetite. I suppose a woman feels much the same."

From this proposal Adelia did not demur, but followed meekly enough into a rather primitive inn that stood diagonally across the road from the brewery. This place combined the solidity of a restaurant with the effervescence of a country bar. A few men gathered here frequently for luncheon, and Joseph had cronies among them.

A chorus of "Hallos" rumbled through the room. There was also—in honor of Joseph's guest—a chorus of glances which combined surprise, curiosity and criticism with some ethereal derivative of roast beef and cabbage—a combination that Miss Adelia decided at once was devoutly not to be wished. She slaughtered Joseph's most innocent sallies with provoking ruthlessness; and when the waitress asked if she would take beer she commanded "Water!" so icily that the

stocky landlady almost expected to find the pump frozen tight.

Adelia scowled at the beef and sniffed at the potatoes; the pie she absolutely refused to consider. A heavy man with the most benignant chop-whiskers imaginable, having finished his meal to the last crumb, came over to thump Joseph on the back in token of friendship; and after successfully bringing his victim within an inch of choking, thought it expedient to say a word to the lady.

"I suppose you have been looking at the brewery, eh?" he questioned, blinking most politely. "It is a wonderful place, eh?"

Miss Adelia seemed to be gazing upon the River of Doubt or something equally remote. And her utterly victorious reply had much of the chill which is rumored to exist in remote polar places. "*We* haven't been interduced," she said. And there was nothing the chop-whiskered gentleman could do but seek refuge in the open.

"Lord have mercy!" was Joseph's intimate and whole-hearted petition. For the first time he entertained reflections not altogether optimistic upon the wisdom of Father Reginald, who had sent this virago upon a tour of the world. But, having settled for the meal, he untied the horses, helped Miss Adelia to her seat, and set off.

The afternoon promised to be thoroughly delightful, in so far as nature's share in the program was concerned. A few clouds were scattered like water-lilies on the great blue lake of sky, and there was a breeze which caught up the perfume of growing flowers and distilled from them a bouquet which no artistry could hope to rival. The horses sniffed the wonder of the season and ambled along as if their load was the phaeton of a lovely princess; and Joseph, following their instinct, forgot the austerity of Adelia to such an extent that he barely rescued himself in the opening stave of a song.

But the most marvelous effect wrought by this magic wind might have been studied in the countenance of Miss Adelia. Her hat having refused to sit quiet, she had taken it to her lap, with the result that her hair was freeing itself from bondage and standing up in graceful wisps of ruddy gold. The wind polished away at her cheeks until it had made rubies of them; it rubbed her eyes until they were topazes.

Subconsciously the mind of the young lady must have been informed of what was taking place, for she caught herself wishing that Joseph would sing a song in which she could join. After all, he was really a likeable fellow, she decided; he had meant well, even if he had been undignified.

The said Joseph, however, contented himself with a random eulogy of the landscape, which he declared fervently was the equal of any place on earth excepting the Meuse valley, in which it had pleased Heaven that he should be born.

At this moment the wind became audacious; it frisked round the wagon as an irrepressible schoolboy might cavort round a May pole, and suddenly made a snatch at Joseph's hat, which it brought down squarely upon the very top of a small cedar tree.

"Whoa!" said Joseph to his horses, and "Stop!" to the hat—two commands which were obeyed almost immediately, so that the recovery of the wandering raiment was sharp and decisive.

Then the miracle happened in Miss Adelia. It was a rusty, raucous, lain-out-in-the-rain miracle, and it created a revolution in the soul whence it came. For the first time in years, the young woman laughed. At first it sounded like the creaking of boards in a dusty and unused room, but one peal was followed by another until the effect produced was so natural that Joseph, joining in, noticed with a start the transformation that had been wrought in his companion's appearance.

"Why, what has happened to you?" he asked in open-mouthed wonder. "You look——"

The phrase was never completed, but it en-

shrined worship, which the eternal feminine in Miss Adelia accepted without a qualm. She laughed again and Joseph, taking heart, began to talk once more and was elated to behold a sympathetic listener.

When he drew up the horses so that Miss Adelia might descend, he said to her very frankly: "I think the ride has done you good."

"I shouldn't be surprised," she answered.

"I wonder," he inquired further, with his foot on the rim of a wagon wheel and his soul abloom with adventure, "whether I could come around to your house some evening and tell you the whole story about the ghost in Tinker's barn?"

"It might be a good idea," Miss Adelia admitted.

Then she fluttered into the house, and the black silk dress seemed to have forgotten its dignity. . . .

Father Reginald was saying his office as he walked to and fro in the shadow of the church. Joseph drove along singing, half unconsciously, a song the words of which delighted the Franciscan so much that he forgot which versicle of the psalm he had been reading, and had to begin again.

* * * * * * *

Just and gentle Saint Francis, in this year of your memory, we should all like to build some

memorial, however flimsy and worthless. And so another little book has come into the world. It really serves no purpose other than to gather up some of the laughter of saints. He who has written it owes to your disciples, teachers in an out-of-the-way place, the dreams of his boyhood and a great deal of the little he has meant to do as a man. They were grave friars, who disciplined themselves; but they enjoyed playing with us, and they laughed at our games. Some have gone to a higher hill than the one on which they lived, while we knew them, with the winds, the birds and the snows; and because they were quite unconsciously like you, they bore wounds such as the service of Christ earns from the world—wounds hidden, nevertheless, by an everlasting smile. Others still go down their accustomed paths, making the day brighter for every one that happens along. All of them, living and dead, have given imperishable beauty and goodness to our country. And so it is well to thank you for them, worthy and benignant Saint, in this hour when the echo of your name is mingled with the rhythm of so many hearts.

(1)

THE END

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